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A

*Ed. P. Mason*

# SHORT HISTORY

OF

# THE CHURCH OF CHRIST,

FROM THE

CLOSE OF THE SACRED NARRATIVE

TO

OUR OWN TIMES.

---

DESIGNED FOR THE USE OF SCHOOLS, OR OF THOSE PERSONS TO WHOM THE  
SIZE OF THE CHURCH HISTORY OF THE LATE MR. MILNER—SHOULD  
THAT VALUABLE WORK EVER BE COMPLETED—WOULD BE  
AN OBJECTION.

---

BY THE REV. JOHN FRY, B.A.

(LATE OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, OXFORD,)

RECTOR OF DESFORD, IN LEICESTERSHIRE—AUTHOR OF A NEW TRANSLATION AND EXPOSITION  
OF THE CANTICLES; EXPOSITORY LECTURES OF ST. PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE  
ROMANS; OF A NEW TRANSLATION AND EXPOSITION OF THE PSALMS,  
AND OF THE SECOND ADVENT;  
ETC. ETC.

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“ — And the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.”

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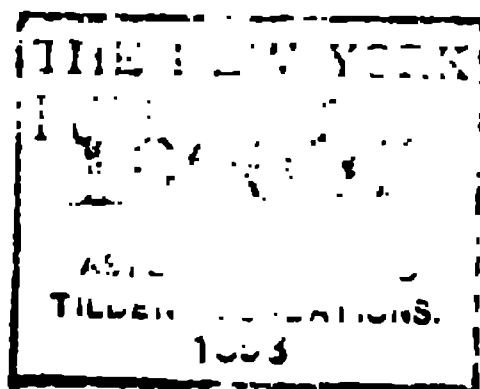
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THESE short memorials of Ecclesiastical History were, a considerable time since, announced as ready for publication. I have to offer an apology, but too valid, for the delay. The last sheet had just gone to the press, when the whole was consumed by fire; and, as the manuscript was at that time in the printer's hand, only a remnant of the Work could, with the utmost diligence, be recovered from the ruins. Restored, at length, as nearly as possible, to its original form, it is now presented to the reader, and it will, I hope, be found to answer the design of its publication.

The "New Plan" of Mr. Milner, which, omitting a great deal of what is found in most other Ecclesiastical Histories, would confine our attention chiefly to the concerns of "real," and not "merely nominal Christians," has been followed in the present Work. And where the guidance of this valuable historian, and that of his learned continuator, the late Dean of Carlisle, cease, it has been my endeavour to trace out the same plan for the ages subsequent to their narrative. The present Work, however, is upon a very reduced scale. Its limits, in order to suit the convenience of a different class of readers or purchasers, are confined to a single volume. The History referred to, already

extends to five full-sized octavos; and, if its future continuators do justice to the plan, it cannot occupy less than as many volumes more.

A pleasing result of the researches conducted on this plan is, that, amidst the multifarious annals of corrupted Christianity, there is evidence still extant, that a body of faithful believers, who “held the mystery of the faith in a good conscience,” have existed in every age, from “the time that the fathers fell asleep,” down to our own times, when, I trust, we may say, in the language of the Apostle—“The epistle of Christ,” “written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the Living God,” “in fleshly tables of the heart,” may be “known and read of all men.”

This is “the eternal church,” against which the gates of Hell cannot prevail. We find its members, indeed, in the *external* churches to which they have belonged, sometimes so “compassed about with the wicked,” that “a wrong judgment proceedeth;” yet, at such times, a few are found “valiant for the truth, upon the earth.” There may be periods, too, when we seem indebted almost solely to the hatred of their enemies, and to the records of persecution, that we can discover there was then such a people upon earth. But we shall often have occasion to remark, that when “the kingdom of God is taken away” from one people, it is in order to “give it to another bearing the fruits thereof;” and when the Gospel light has been traced to its extinction in one part of the world, we shall generally find, if we are careful to mark the date, that

about the same time it was being rekindled in another quarter.

“THE TRUTH” that “maketh free,” as taught by the Holy Spirit, can be but ONE; and with “the acknowledging of the Truth,” eternal life is connected by the Word of God. That Word, as written in the Holy Scriptures, must be our only standard of Truth. We are to try the opinions held by churches and professors, by this standard, and not to bend the standard to the tradition of churches, or to the religious sentiments of the fathers and uninspired teachers. Our object in the study of Church History should be to learn—not what is Truth, but what are the progress and effects of that truth which we already understand from the Oracles of God.

Could the “Christian mind” be consulted, I am persuaded that we should be struck with the *sameness* of Truth, as taught of God, in every age. But on the page of history, even of the history of true Christians, it does not always shine forth with the same clearness and fulness. Though it is the same heavenly light, it seems often to fall discoloured and obscured by the medium of human ignorance and prejudice through which it passes. We have sometimes to complain of inconsistency in ecclesiastical writers and orators, who at other times seem to transmit the truth so fairly. From the circumstances of the ages, also, in which they lived, from the errors and heresies they had to oppose, even the orthodox teachers refract not all the rays of light at all times with equal brightness, or at least seem not to do so, from the records of history.



Those ages, for instance, which cast so clear a ray in their defence of the doctrine of the Most Holy Trinity, and of the mysterious person of the Incarnate Saviour, are not so luminous in their testimonies for the “second” great truth, “which is like unto it”—“By grace ye are saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.” But, at a subsequent period, when this great truth is more directly and publicly impugned, the testimony becomes clearer, and the voice of the universal church seems to be raised at the call of Augustin, to declare what was the “truth once delivered to the saints.”

But, notwithstanding the partial and varying beam that on different occasions shines through the medium of the fathers and eminent teachers of the church, and which, had we no other standard, might sometimes perplex us, history does present us a proof of an incidental kind, but a very satisfactory one, that the Christian system, when administered with life and power, has in every age been the *same*;—and the proof is this—That we find an exact agreement concerning it in the hostile views of its sagacious opponents, and a remarkable coincidence in the arguments by which, in their appeal to the common judgment of mankind, they would deliver it over to ignominy and reproach. Observe the description which the philosophers Celsus and Porphyry present, of the preaching and doctrine of the Christians in the age of the apostolic fathers<sup>1</sup>. And again, at the beginning of

<sup>1</sup> Page 60.

the third century, remark the objections which are so lucidly stated in Minucius Felix, against the doctrines then taught by the Christians<sup>1</sup>. Compare with these objections, the calumnies of the Pelagians against the doctrines defended by Augustin, in the fifth century<sup>2</sup>. Observe how the same inferences are drawn from the doctrine which Luther taught, by Aleander, the papal advocate, at the diet of Worms, in the year 1521<sup>3</sup>; and the uniform language of the opponents of the Reformation, on several other occasions;—the manner, for instance, in which the popish bishop Gardiner expresses himself, on archbishop Cranmer's publication of the first book of Homilies<sup>4</sup>. And, lastly, compare the reasonings and objections—and even the very language of the less wary—of more modern opponents of “the Gospel of the grace of God.”

I conceive that the comparison of these objections, will impress the reader with a strong conviction, that the obnoxious doctrine has been the same in all ages.

And if we have embraced the same “truth” which animated the primitive Christians, and the teachers of the blessed Reformation, and find it still impugned with the same censures and calumnies which Celsus, the pagan in Minucius Felix, the papal advocates, and others, in their day, have used, we may turn it into a testimony, that we are right and correct in our statements.

Nor must we be “ashamed” of our Master, or deny his “doctrine:”—nor shall we, if to us it has been “the

<sup>1</sup> Page 67.<sup>2</sup> Page 137, &c.<sup>3</sup> Page 287.<sup>4</sup> Page 406.

power of God unto salvation.” There will be no room, then, to doubt concerning its tendency. If the wisest of our fellow-mortals denounce our doctrine, “as naturally tending to the weakening or extinction of moral principle,” “excluding the ideas of right and wrong,” as “opinions contrary to our consciousness, to our moral feeling and judgment, and to all our principles of action,”—we shall not heed the reproach, because we know what they cannot know, who never felt its power. And we shall remember that it is written, “The foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.”

*March 12, 1825.*

A

**SHORT HISTORY**

**OF**

**THE CHURCH OF CHRIST,**

**ETC. ETC.**

---

**PART THE FIRST.**

**HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN THE  
PRIMITIVE AGES.**

---

**INTRODUCTION.**

**O**UR oldest ecclesiastical historian has observed, that the history of the church ought, in strict propriety, to begin with the “dispensation of Christ,” from whom we are called Christians; and in Christ we are to consider a twofold nature;—a superior, in which he is manifested as God,—an inferior, the nature of man, which he has taken upon him, that he might be capable of suffering in order to our salvation. “In this, the true history of the Founder of our religion,” Eusebius further remarks, “we discover its dignity and antiquity; and an answer is afforded to those who object against the faith of the Gospel its novelty and recent origin<sup>1</sup>.”

The histories, indeed, of most religious and philosophical sects, trace their origin, as well in the personal characters and early circumstances of their respective founders, as in the transactions which first disclosed them to the world, at the

<sup>1</sup> Euseb. Eccles. Hist. b. i. 1’.

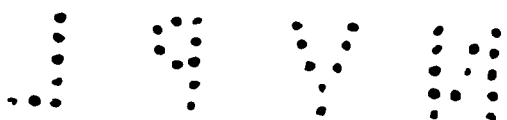
head of their disciples and the societies they had formed. This is, in a very especial manner, the case with respect to the church of Christ ; since the ‘ salvation ’ of which they who constitute his church believe themselves to be partakers, in the midst of a lost and ruined world, and the ‘ holy calling ’ which has convoked them together, to obey from the heart a form of doctrine delivered to them, and which has formed them into a visible society upon earth, are expressly declared to be “ according to a purpose and grace which was given them in Christ Jesus before the world began ; but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel<sup>1</sup>.”

This appearing of the Saviour, evidently refers to the transactions which that age had witnessed, when the Son of God had assumed his inferior nature, and was manifested as “ the Son of Man ” upon earth ; but for the dignity and antiquity of our religion, as the historian has admonished us, we must look to that superior nature of Christ, whereby he is manifested as God also, and in which alone he could sustain eternal relations to his church, or, before the actual assumption of his humanity, could act in his predestined character, and gather to himself, as we know he did, a people, who, in every age, were waiting for his appearing.

The knowledge which God has given to us, in his revealed word, concerning his own mysterious and incomprehensible existence, can alone help us to form a notion of this superior nature of our Divine Master ; but by this we are taught that the oneness of the Deity,—without destroying its perfect oneness,—subsists in Three Persons ; each of whom, by himself, is God and Jehovah, though there are not three Gods or three Jehovahs, but one God and one Jehovah. ‘ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,’ all his followers accordingly have been ordered to be baptized by our blessed Lord himself.

That a church, bought by the death of the Son of God, called by his Spirit, and evidenced by sincere penitence of heart, and the confession of a true faith in the promises, existed in the world from the very period of the fall, we have abundant evidence in the Scriptures of the Old Testament. The promise of the Woman’s seed to our first parents, preached Christ ; the declaration of God, that he would put “ enmity,” or a principle

<sup>1</sup> 2 Tim. ii. 9, 10.



of hostility, between the woman and the serpent, marked the separation of a people from a world seduced under the dominion of Satan, by the instilling of a principle of divine grace into their hearts, and might be described, in the language of the New Testament, as “ turning them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God.” We perceive, too, from the very first, ordinances of worship exhibiting the same “ mysteries of godliness” that the rites of the Christian church are intended to display ; especially the ceremony of sacrifice, typifying the offering of that “ Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world.” The knowledge of this same covenant of redemption, and the observance of these same ordinances of worship, Noah propagated among the new race of mankind after the flood ; a traditionary knowledge of which all ancient nations seem to have preserved, long after they had become apostates from the worship of the true God.

From the short account which we have in Scripture, of the Patriarchal Church previous to the separation of the family of Abraham, and before the institution of the Mosaic rites in the nation of the Israelites, the grand principle inculcated by revealed religion was, in fact, “ God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.” The altar and the sacrifice, with the rites of purifying, discover this ; and also a divinely instituted priesthood, which could shadow forth the great Redeemer to them that waited for him, not only perhaps in his priestly, but also in his regal character.

On the testimony to HIM THAT WAS TO COME, after the institution of the Jewish Church, I need not here insist ; or on what is found concerning him in the Law, in the Psalms, and in the Prophets, through a long succession of ages. The Church of England is well supported in her declaration, “ The Old Testament is not contrary to the New : for both in the Old and New Testament, everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and man, being both God and man<sup>1</sup>.”

The members of the church, before the “ coming of Christ in the flesh,” had not indeed all the privileges which his faithful people now enjoy ; but the principles of revealed religion were always the same, and its gracious progress may be described in the same language : at “ the hearing of faith,” “ they turned to God from idols” —or from whatever darkness

<sup>1</sup> Art. VII.

or vanity had held their minds in thralldom—"to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven." They waited for the Redeemer's coming to perform all the promises made unto the fathers; perhaps, in some respects, without a clear distinction, in their expectations, between his first and his second advent. That which affords a specific characteristic of the New Testament church, and which has somewhat varied the objects of their faith and hope, is, that "Christ hath once appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation."

The history of this last dispensation of redemption, from the period of the incarnation of the Son of God, or, more strictly, from the close of the canonical Scriptures down to our own times, is the object of our present research:—the history of the people who believe that Jesus is the Son of God; who have remission of sins through his precious blood-shedding; and whose hearts are directed by the Spirit "into the love of God and patient waiting for Jesus Christ," now gone to appear in the presence of God for us, as our great High Priest, and to come again in his glorious majesty, to judge the quick and the dead, at his appearing and kingdom.

That great event, the incarnation of the Son of God, when he, "whose goings forth were of old, even from everlasting," was born in Bethlehem Ephrata, of a virgin of the house of David, and took our nature upon him in all the circumstances of its humiliation,—sin only excepted,—is minutely recorded by the evangelists; but their records of their Divine Master being in the hand of every Christian, precludes the necessity of our entering here upon the narration of these well-known events.

We perceive from what is said respecting Simeon and Anna, that notwithstanding the general corruption of the Jewish church, there existed at this time, in Jerusalem, a people who were waiting for the appearing of the promised Saviour, "the Lord's Christ." This has been satisfactorily accounted for by those who study the Old Testament prophecies, especially those of Daniel. But it appears that the Samaritans also, who are reported to have received only the five books of Moses, entertained the same general expectation. We read the confession of one of them, whose information could hardly have been superior to that of the rest of her countrymen:—I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all

things<sup>1</sup>.” And what is more remarkable, the expectation of an extraordinary person, at that time to arise in Judea, to be the author of blessings to mankind, was almost universal in the civilized world, about the time of our Saviour’s birth ; a circumstance which a late eminent writer is of opinion cannot be accounted for by any knowledge which the heathen nations had of the Jewish Scriptures : “ the ground of this expectation,” he remarks, “ was probably some traditional obscure remembrance of the original promises handed down from the earliest ages of mankind<sup>2</sup>.”

The nativity of our blessed Lord, which is shewn, on good authority, to have been dated too late in the vulgar Christian era<sup>3</sup>, is assigned, by late chronologists, to the year 5 B. C. and is supposed to have taken place in the autumn of that year. Except the incidents that attended his miraculous conception and his birth, and his appearing among the doctors in the temple, when at the age of twelve<sup>4</sup>, the sacred writers give us no account of our Lord’s life, till he was about thirty years of age, when he appeared among the multitude which came to John to be baptized<sup>5</sup>.

Of the private life of the Redeemer, the Spirit of God has not thought it necessary to leave us a more detailed account. Obscure and retired, uneventful in incident, and occupied, perhaps, in the humblest duties of life,—for there is no doubt that “ in the sweat of his face he ate his bread<sup>6</sup>,”—it would have ill suited the page of general history. The same may be remarked of the lives and employments of the greater part of his humble and most spiritual followers, who have passed through the world altogether “ unknown to fame :” a circumstance which has at times left a blank in the history of the

<sup>1</sup> John, iv. 25.

<sup>2</sup> See Bishop Horsley’s Dissertation on the Prophecies of the Messiah dispersed among the Heathen.

<sup>3</sup> The vulgar Christian era was invented by Dionysius Exiguus, a Roman abbot, who flourished in the reign of Justinian, A.D. 532 : it was not in frequent use in the West till about the year 730, nor fully established by public authority till 1431.—See Dr. HALE’s *Chronology*.

<sup>4</sup> A. D. 8.

<sup>5</sup> A. D. 27.

<sup>6</sup> Justin Martyr, distinguishing the two advents of the Messiah, observes, “ the first was that in which he appeared mortal, without glory and without beauty, passing for an artificer, and making ploughs and yokes.” The second advent is that in which the Messiah will appear encircled with glory, attended with his holy angels ; according to the prophecy of Daniel, chap. vii. to reward the righteous, and take vengeance on the ungodly ; as in Psalms lxxii. and cix.



church, in its most peculiar sense, as recorded from age to age.

Our Lord, however, had important duties to perform in public life, before he was to leave this vale of misery, or arrive at the last stage of those sufferings, which he came into the world to endure for man.

We find accordingly, that soon after his baptism Jesus began to appear in a new character, and to exhibit his credentials as a prophet sent from God, in the miraculous power that he possessed to alter, at his pleasure, the course of nature : “ and from that time Jesus began to preach and to say, Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” The personal ministry of our Lord, is generally considered as occupying the space of about three years and a half, from the autumn of the year twenty-seven to the spring of the year thirty-one of the vulgar era ; including, in the emphatic language of St. Peter, “ all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us<sup>1</sup>.”

I enter not upon the history of this period, for the reasons already assigned. The abiding fruits of our Lord’s personal ministry, however, do not appear to have been very abundant. It often made a strong impression upon the natural feelings of his hearers ; but, in his parable of the sower, and in other parables, he has shewn us of what nature, for the most part, these impressions were : a true example, probably, of the effects produced by the preaching of the most powerful evangelists in subsequent ages. The good ground prepared by the Father of Spirits to receive the seed, is not co-extensive with the number of convinced and deeply affected hearers. But it has been justly observed, that “ the Son of God came from heaven, not to make the Gospel revelation, but to be the subject of it, by doing and suffering all that was necessary to procure the salvation of mankind<sup>2</sup>.” The largest number mentioned, as called by his own ministry, by the preaching of the twelve apostles and of the seventy disciples, is “ five hundred brethren.” The number of the names together of those that assembled with the apostles at Jerusalem after the ascension, it is said, “ were one hundred and twenty.” These were waiting, according to the Lord’s direction, for the coming of the Holy Ghost, whom “ not many days hence” they were to receive ; and, with

<sup>1</sup> Acts, i. 21, 22.

<sup>2</sup> Macknight, Magee, &c.

HIS gracious influence, “power to become the witnesses unto Christ in Jerusalem, and in Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.”

On the day of Pentecost, this Heavenly Comforter descended with visible tokens and demonstrations of his presence, as is recorded in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. The wisdom with which “the ministers of the word” were now inspired, and the divine influence which was to accompany their preaching, soon became apparent: on that very day, while Peter explained from Scripture the wonderful event that had taken place, and discoursed concerning the death and resurrection of Jesus, the effect of divine power on the hearers was so great, that about three thousand souls were added to the church.

This work of grace is thus described;—(and it well becomes the historian of the church, to mark what true conversion is, while we are upon scriptural ground, that we may learn to distinguish its nature, when we descend to times of human tradition, and have to form our judgments of many very equivocal pretensions:)—“When they heard, they were pricked in their hearts.” No words can more clearly point out a deep and spiritual conviction of their lost estate. They are ready also to obey the truth: “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” Peter exhorts them to “repentance;” which, in their state of mind, was to encourage them to give vent to their feelings, in self-condemnation and self-abhorrence, in the confession and renouncing of all their sins, with the renouncing at the same time of every vain refuge that had previously deluded their darkened consciences. He next exhorts them “to be baptized every one of them in the name of Jesus Christ,” for the remission of sins. Their submission to baptism was to be, at once, their public profession of faith in Christ, as the propitiation for their sins, and an effectual token on the part of God, of their purification, by spiritual regeneration, through baptism into the death of Christ. Then, the apostle tells them, they too “shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” This to the believing penitent would be glad tidings indeed—they heard “the gospel of their salvation.” The consequence was, “as many as gladly received the word were baptized;” and although it is not mentioned, it is certain from a comparison with other Scriptures, that, according to the promise held out by St. Peter, they all received the gift of the Holy Ghost by the imposition of the apostles’ hands. Some miraculous gifts at that time

indicated this possession of the Spirit. But the gift of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, for the confirmation and sealing of the heirs of promise, was to abide with the church for ever. Though all miracles which could be a sign to them who are without, have ceased, yet the essential operation abides.

Here we see what it is to become a Christian ; and if we would have a true history of Christianity, and not of something that falsely bears its name, we must carefully carry this pattern in our minds. And that we may, on scriptural authority, fix on certain principles, whereby to judge of the true church, whose history it is proposed, as exclusively as possible, to narrate, let us not fail to remark, in this place, a practical illustration of what St. Paul calls “ the principles of the doctrine of Christ<sup>1</sup>.” He mentions them as being six in number : “ laying the foundation of repentance from dead works—faith towards God—the doctrine of baptism—the laying on of hands—the resurrection of the dead—and eternal judgment.” The first four of these “ first principles,” are plainly displayed in the account before us ; respecting the last two, we shall have no difficulty in inferring, that these converts to the Christian faith were properly instructed, both from the discourse of St. Peter recorded, and from “ the many other words” with which he is said to “ testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation<sup>2</sup>.” And these two doctrines are expressly brought into view in the very next discourse which Peter and John held with the people : “ Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord, and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you : whom the heavens must receive, until the times of the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began<sup>3</sup>.”

<sup>1</sup> Heb. vi. 1, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Acts, ii. 40.

<sup>3</sup> Acts, iii. 19, &c.

## CHAPTER THE FIRST.

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST DURING THE APOSTOLIC AGE, EXTENDING TO THE CLOSE OF THE FIRST CENTURY OF THE CHRISTIAN ERA.

IN the multitude brought to the faith on the day of Pentecost, “we see the regular appearance of the first Christian church;” understanding that term in its restricted sense, for the church in the full possession of its New Testament privileges. They are described as “continuing steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” The ordinance of preaching—so I understand the term “apostles’ doctrine”—not only as a means of gathering the church from the midst of the world, but also of building up her members in their holy faith, seems to stand prominent among her institutions. The second term may apply to every part of the social intercourse which the members of the church had with each other and with their pastors, in the regular observance of the appointed discipline that held the body together, and in the mutual interchange of the offices of love and charity, of spiritual admonition and comfort. “Breaking of bread” certainly refers to the administration of the Lord’s supper; in the participation of which, and in public prayers and psalmody, consisted the Christian worship.

That a body of people who separated from the rest of their countrymen, in whose religion they had been educated, and associated together for the exercise of these new ordinances of worship, would be regarded as a sect or heresy, by the members of the Jewish church, followed of course. They were not so in fact, for the great Legislator and King had himself appeared, and authorised and ordained these new institutions; signifying to them, at the same time, the superseding of the old—a change both of the law and of the priesthood. So that the guilt of a breach of union lay not with them who “obeyed God rather than man,” but with them who refused to be reformed. The conduct, however, of the Christians of Jerusalem, towards the religious institutions of their country, is carefully to be remarked. Not only they were not taught to do outrage to the feelings of their unenlightened neighbours, but as far as possible they conformed to all their established rites and usages. Des-

titute of spirit and of truth, as the temple service had now become, and degraded and depraved as the general character of its appointed ministers was known to be, we find them “continuing daily, with one accord, in the temple;” and they appear on all occasions to have waited their expulsion from the synagogue, as a suffering they must endure for their Master’s sake, rather than as what they were to assert as their Gospel liberty.

The ordinances of the Jewish church were plainly not sufficient to feed the flame of their newly kindled devotion; therefore, having divine authority for the measure, they had their own proper assemblies for the solemnities of the Christian worship, and for their spiritual edification. These they held in convenient private houses appointed for that purpose, for this seems to be the force of the expression rendered “from house to house.” There must, in all probability, have been several of these houses. No one room would have been capable of holding a body of three or four thousand people, soon to multiply into many thousands more; so that whatever views may be taken of the ecclesiastical polity of the apostolic age, it seems to be certain, that the church of Jerusalem consisted of many congregations of believers, though it is always considered as having formed one individual church, governed by a common authority.

One circumstance should be mentioned concerning the professors of the Christian faith in Jerusalem, in which, so far as it appears, they differed from all the other primitive churches. In all these churches we find, from the precepts delivered both to the rich and to the poor, that nothing like a division of property had taken place; but among these first converts at Jerusalem, we read that “all that believed were together, and had all things common, and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all as every man had need.” The price of their possessions, as appears from a subsequent account, was laid at the apostles’ feet. We cannot doubt that this was by divine appointment. None were compelled to this measure, because none were compelled to unite themselves to this society; but all that believed, consented to “sell all that they had, that they might have treasure in heaven;” and I think it appears from the awful visitation on Ananias and Sapphira, that it was a law of the society. It pleased God, perhaps, that this should be the particular trial of their faith “who first trusted in Christ;” or it might have been intended as a provision for their

mutual welfare, in the scenes of persecution and of national distress in which this branch of the visible church was soon to be involved ; or have had further in view, with respect to those who should survive, or flee from, these troubles, the preparation of an army of missionaries, who should bear the banners of the cross from Jerusalem to the ends of the world.

Such is the account of the first Christian society, organized on the day of Pentecost. To this "church" we read "the Lord added daily such as should be saved," or "such as were saved." In which declarations two important truths are involved,—that though repentance is, by the message of Christ, commanded to every man, and remission of sins in his name is to be preached unto all, yet, in the present condition of fallen man, any sincere obedience to this message, is gratefully to be ascribed only to a moral or spiritual influence of God ; and that it is his pleasure, where he bestows the gift of salvation, generally at least, to bestow it in no other way than in the communion of his church.

Every thing in the narrative of the Acts of the Apostles, bespeaks the sudden and prodigious increase of the church, immediately subsequent to the day of Pentecost<sup>1</sup>. It appears that the sect of the Sadducees had prevailed much in these last miserable days of the Jewish church, and had great influence at this time in the government of the nation. They were particularly offended that the apostles "preached through Jesus the resurrection of the dead ;" they employed the public authority to restrain them, but they attempted in vain to hinder the progress of the Gospel : "Many of them that heard the word believed, and the number of the men were about five thousand<sup>2</sup>." It pleased God, in some measure, to check this persecution which the rulers meditated, by causing his church to be 'magnified' in the eyes of the world, through the extraordinary power of performing miracles of healing, with which he at this time endowed the apostles : "and believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women."

So far every thing seemed to prosper with the church ; the Gospel was evidently popular with the great mass of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, notwithstanding the opposition of their rulers. The Pharisees were not displeased at the bold assertion of the doctrine of the resurrection. But the days of her prosperity were drawing to a close, and her members were soon to

<sup>1</sup> Acts, iv.

<sup>2</sup> Acts, iv. 4.

be dispersed and scattered abroad ; as a productive seed, however, for her future increase in all the countries where they should be cast.

But, for reasons already assigned, I attempt not to detail the events so beautifully narrated in the page of Scripture. My reader must be presumed to come to the perusal of this volume with a mind well informed respecting the occurrences recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, and illustrated by the Epistles. I shall only note the chief and leading circumstances, that we may gather up the threads of the sacred narrative, in order to proceed with the history of the church, where the sacred writings leave it.

The martyrdom of Stephen<sup>1</sup> is a distinguished era, as marking the rise of those persecutions, which began to scatter abroad the happy society at Jerusalem. Little did that first martyr in the cause of Christ think, in his last sufferings, that his mantle, with a double portion of his spirit, was to fall on a young man among the most forward of his persecutors, at whose feet the executioners of his cruel sentence had laid their clothes. This was Saul of Tarsus, the future apostle to the Gentiles, whose miraculous conversion, with the subsequent labours of a life spent in the cause of the Gospel, comprises so considerable a portion of the scriptural history of the church. This first persecution lasted nearly five years, when<sup>2</sup> the Jews themselves became involved in trouble with their Roman governors, in consequence of an order from the emperor Caligula, to erect his statue in their holy temple ; but this profanation was averted by the death of the emperor<sup>3</sup>. This season of national distress engrossed, it should seem, the attention of the Jewish rulers, and they ceased for the present to disturb and harass the flock of Christ. The situation of the church is thus described : “ Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified ; and, walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.” The regions here mentioned, seem to mark the extent of the Christian profession at this time, and this is the first occasion of the mention of ‘ churches’ in the plural number<sup>4</sup>. We discover, therefore, that though the many thousands of believers in the city of Jerusalem, who assembled in their different congregations, were considered as one church, yet, when societies were formed in the distant cities of Palestine,

<sup>1</sup> A. D. 34.

<sup>2</sup> A. D. 39.

<sup>3</sup> A. D. 40.

<sup>4</sup> Acts, ix. 31.



these were considered as distinct churches. All of them were, no-doubt, under the spiritual government of the apostles : of Peter especially, it is mentioned, that he “ passed through all quarters<sup>1</sup>. ”

The Gospel was about this time received in the great city of Antioch<sup>2</sup>. Here the first church of Gentile converts was erected ; here the disciples were first called ‘ Christians,’ and here began the public labours of the apostle Paul. At Antioch he long resided, and from this city he and his companions went forth on their missionary excursions into the neighbouring countries, and hither they returned. So that Antioch, at this period, may justly be regarded as the metropolitan church of the Gentile world, as Jerusalem was of the believers among the Hebrews.

The council of Jerusalem<sup>3</sup> is another era in the annals of the apostles<sup>4</sup>. The mother church was consulted respecting a question which had disturbed the peace of the church of Antioch — ‘ Whether the Gentile converts, in order to salvation, must necessarily be circumcised, and observe the law of Moses,’ as the believing Hebrews still did, not as the means of salvation, but as a national obligation still binding on them as Jews. In this holy assembly the liberty of the Gentile converts was clearly asserted, to their great joy and satisfaction. But the occasion of this council marks the first attempt to inject the leaven of the Pharisee into the doctrine of the Christian faith. The decision of the church of Jerusalem was, at this time, a check to the spreading of this infection ; but it was not destroyed, and it deserves to be particularly noted by the historian, as the first and most subtle of the corruptions of the church, and as that which, in many subsequent ages, appears as the beginning of the departure from the faith once delivered to the saints. About five or six years after this era we find St. Paul writing to the churches of Galatia respecting this same perversion of the truth, appearing however in a fuller form than when it caused the assembly of the council at Jerusalem<sup>5</sup>. “ I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ, unto another Gospel<sup>6</sup> ! ” The occasion of this epistle was the introduction of this heretical doctrine into these churches, which, if suffered to prevail, would overturn the very foundation of the faith of Christ ;

<sup>1</sup> Acts, ix. 32.

<sup>2</sup> A. D. 43.

<sup>3</sup> A. D. 49.

<sup>4</sup> This fundamental date has been adopted by Petavius, Pearson, Barrington, Lardner, Paley, and Michaelis.—Dr. Hales.

<sup>5</sup> Dr. Hales, A.D. 50. Barrington, Benson, and Lardner, 53. Pearson, 57. Bible Chronology, 58.

<sup>6</sup> Gal. i. 6.



and, at this time, it threatened to prevail, for the apostle declares, “ he stands in doubt of them, whether his labours have not been in vain.” His fervent language, indeed, paints his alarm for them all to be at the utmost — the error being fatal. But he afterwards mitigates his suspicions, by saying, “ A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. I have confidence in you *through the Lord*, that ye will be none otherwise minded : but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be<sup>1</sup>. ”

This damnable heresy, for such the apostle unequivocally and repeatedly asserts it to be, denied justification — as including a title to final salvation, to be of faith alone : it taught that it is by the works of the law. This heresy has been, perhaps with propriety, termed Pharisaism ; for it was a perversion of the religion of the Gospel, similar to that which the Pharisees had been the most notorious instruments of introducing into the religion of Moses and the prophets. It stumbled at the same stumbling-stone concerning “ the law of righteousness ; because they sought it not by faith, but, as it were, by the deeds of the law<sup>2</sup>. ” This error among the unbelieving Jews, was a principal reason with them for rejecting the religion of Jesus altogether. “ Justification by faith alone ” appeared to be the most offensive of its doctrines. But whether Jesus was, or was not the promised Messiah, “ justification by works ” was opposite to the whole code of revelation ; and to this effect the apostles always argue with the pharisaical Jews. The pharisaical professors of the Gospel laid indeed the stumbling-block in a different part of the path ; they admitted that Jesus was the promised Messiah, and allowed all the rites of the Christian church ; but they would engraft upon this Christian profession, the same doctrine of ‘ justification by works. ’ Paul’s remonstrance is, “ Are ye so foolish ? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh<sup>3</sup> ? ”

That the Galatians, who were yielding to this persuasion, did not mean to give up the profession of Christ, is most obvious ; no, nor remission of sins in his blood : but as to their title for final salvation, they were to be justified by the law<sup>4</sup>. The law, which they desired to be under, was, as appears by the apostle’s references, the law given at Sinai, as a covenant of salvation. That covenant, indeed, was grounded on the doctrine of a vicarious sacrifice, to purge away sin, and reconcile to God, — as the term ‘ covenant ’ implies, and as was shewn by the rites instituted

<sup>1</sup> Gal. v. 9, 10.

<sup>2</sup> Gal. iii. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. ix. 32..

<sup>4</sup> Gal. v. 4.

on that occasion. But the benefit was held on condition of the strict observance in future of "all things written in the book of the law to do them." This was the character of the national covenant of God with the Jews, by which, in rejecting the Gospel, they chose to abide; and under the curse of which, as a people, they fell. This legal covenant was never intended by God to be the way of salvation to the believing children of Abraham, but was to lead them, "shut up under it till the promised seed should come," to a more practical knowledge of sin, and more ardent faith and expectation of the Saviour, shadowed forth as the Surety of a better covenant. The application of this covenant, as a "law," or directory for the attainment "of righteousness," personally to the children of Abraham, was a perversion of the carnal Jews, and overturned, in fact, their faith in the promised Saviour. It was a fatal error under the Old Testament, as well as under the New; and the pharisaical Christians, or anti-Christians of Galatia, seem to have allowed so much, and no more, to the work of a Saviour who had come, as an ancient Pharisee would, to the hope of Israel, whom he expected.

I have been the more particular in dwelling upon the nature of this heresy, because of its subtle nature and wide-spreading influence in subsequent ages. We have some grounds also to infer, that, in these Christian Pharisees, we have the first instance of there being persecutors of their brethren among the professed followers of Christ<sup>1</sup>.

I would further remark, that it is very important, in order to understand the history of these times, to distinguish between this heresy in the churches of Galatia, and that zeal for the law, which animated the church at Jerusalem, and generally them of the circumcision throughout the world. What the latter contended for, was, that, as belonging to the nation of the Jews, they were bound to observe all the laws and ceremonies of the Mosaic institution, as David and the prophets had done; and for this they would plead the example of our Lord himself, in the days of his flesh, and the present practice of all the apostles. But still, as Paul observes to Peter, it was their unanimous persuasion, that "we who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus

<sup>1</sup> Gal. iv. 29; vi. 12.

Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law<sup>1</sup>: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." The Galatian heretics, indeed, adopted the very same ceremonies and customs as the Hebrew Christians; but on a very different principle. To judge of the fundamental difference, we have only to compare the different conduct of the apostle on the two occasions. To conciliate the latter, as being in a harmless error, at the most, he complies with the same customs and ceremonies, and causes Timothy, though a Gentile, to be circumcised. But respecting the former, he protests, "I, Paul, say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace<sup>2</sup>."

The narrative of the Acts concludes with the account of St. Paul's first journey to Rome<sup>3</sup>, and of his abode there, as a prisoner at large, for two whole years. During this period, he wrote several of his later epistles; that to the Ephesians, probably, during the first year<sup>4</sup>. He calls himself the "prisoner of the Lord, an ambassador in bonds." The epistle to the Colossians, which bears a great resemblance to the former<sup>5</sup>, was written at the same time, and sent by the same messenger. It appears by this epistle, that both Mark and Luke were with him at this time in Rome. He cautions the Colossians against being "spoiled by philosophy and vain deceit, against voluntary humility, and the worshipping of angels;" which are marks of the early existence of those errors, and a reference to which will more fully occupy our attention hereafter. The epistle to Philemon is referred to the same period: in this he expresses a confidence of being soon restored to his liberty. Near the termination of his confinement, he wrote to the Philippians: he "hopes to come to them himself shortly," and "will send Timothy immediately, as soon as he shall see how it will go with him<sup>6</sup>." He could tell them, that what had happened to him—his being taken a prisoner to Rome, and his confinement there for two years, had been overruled for the advancement of the Gospel. The providential design of his imprisonment had been manifested in the conversion of some persons in the emperor's palace, as well as in

<sup>1</sup> Gal. i.<sup>2</sup> Gal. v. 2, 3, 4.<sup>3</sup> A. D. 62.<sup>4</sup> Dr. Hales, A. D. 62.—Lardner, 61.—Bible Chron. A. D. 64.<sup>5</sup> Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*.<sup>6</sup> Chap. ii.

all other parts of the great city : he had salutations for them from “ saints of Cesar’s household !”

In another respect, also, the spreading of the glad tidings of Christ had been advanced by the apostle’s retention in bonds ; it had stirred up the zeal of others, to speak the word with greater boldness. But how strange is the disclosure ! “ Some preached Christ of envy and strife” — “ of contention, not sincerely,” thinking “ to add affliction to his bonds !” But still he could rejoice in it, for by this means the knowledge of Christ was further extended in the midst of the heathen world ; and he seems to see, in this circumstance, a promise of his own release, that he might check the mischief of the disorder to the church itself<sup>1</sup>. He bids them beware of false teachers. Some he designates as “ dogs,” meaning perhaps such as he had just alluded to, “ who preached Christ of envy and strife,” who, if they did indeed achieve a collection of the flock of Christ, were, in disposition, not like its true pastors and overseers, but like snarling and quarrelsome dogs. Some he calls “ evil workers,” or “ bad workmen,” marking their unfitness for the office they had undertaken : some, “ the concision,” or spurious circumcision ; denoting evidently the Judaizing teachers who would fain subject the Christian believer to the yoke of Jewish ceremonies, contrary to the decrees of the apostles at Jerusalem — perhaps with a view of introducing the Galatian heresy. The apostle mentions, in this epistle, his hope to be able to send Timothy to them almost immediately ; and the notice in the Epistle to the Hebrews — “ Our brother Timothy is set at liberty,” or, rather, is sent forth, “ with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you,” very strongly marks the author of that nameless epistle, and connects its date with that to the Philippians<sup>2</sup>, about the latter end of the year sixty-three, or beginning of sixty-four. The great and leading design of this epistle, is, to lead the members of the Hebrew churches, who were all at this time zealous for the law, to a proper understanding of its true nature, as intended for a time only, to shadow forth the mysteries of the Gospel. He also prepares their minds for the issue of those national calamities, which were now so fast thickening around them, when they must behold “ Zion reduced to a wilderness, Jerusalem a heap of stones ; their holy and their beautiful house, where their fathers had praised God, burnt up with fire, and all their pleasant things laid waste.”

<sup>1</sup> Philip. i. 20.

<sup>2</sup> See Dr. Hales, Lardner, and Macknight.

This naturally leads us back, to consider the state of affairs in this country, since the time that Paul was carried thence to stand at Cesar's judgment-seat.

Soon after Paul was sent to Rome, Festus died in his province, and was succeeded by Albinus<sup>1</sup>. Ananus was about the same time appointed to the high priesthood by Agrippa. When Paul had escaped from their hands, the malice of the Jews was particularly directed against James, whom we find, in several places of the Acts, to have held the chief government of that church. Eusebius<sup>2</sup>, indeed, in the language of a subsequent age, calls him "the bishop of the church;" and if the name, in its restricted sense, be not so ancient as the period of which we are now treating, the outlines of episcopal government in individual churches are certainly distinguishable in "James and the presbytery."

James, who "took the government of the church after the apostles," as Eusebius repeats after an ancient writer who immediately succeeded the apostles<sup>3</sup>, appears to have been a person most unexceptionable in the eyes of the Jews, on account of his very great strictness and zeal in the observance of some particular ceremonies of their religion: the language of this author concerning him conveys the notion that he had taken the vows of the ancient Nazarites upon him. We read of Anna, in the early part of our Lord's history, "that she departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers, night and day<sup>4</sup>;" so it is said of James, that he "frequented the temple alone, where he might be found prostrate on his knees, praying for the sins of the people." A person of this cast of character was very likely to command the respect of a superstitious people, and to divert their malignant attention, for a time, from those doctrines that he had embraced, and which taught him true holiness in the sight of God. Accordingly, he was held in great reverence with all the people, and had acquired among them the title of "the Just." The rulers of the Jews seem to have thought they could prevail with him by flattery, to stay the people in their error concerning the crucified; but he publicly, before all the multitude, confessed him to be "the Son of God, our Saviour and Lord." — "Why ask ye me of Jesus the Son of Man, since he sitteth at the right hand of the great power in heaven, and shall come

<sup>1</sup> Pearson, A.D. 63.—Hales, 63.

<sup>2</sup> Lib. ii. cap. 23.

<sup>3</sup> Hegesippus. He also repeats the same story from Clement, chap. i. and it is supported by the concurrent testimony of Josephus.

<sup>4</sup> Luke, ii. 37.

in the clouds of the air." He is answered by many among the multitude, "Hosanna in the highest to the Son of David." This leads to his immediate death: they thrust him from the elevated station in which they had placed him, and stoned him. Having recovered himself a little, he prayed on his knees: "I beseech thee, Lord God and Father, forgive them; they know not what they do." On this, one with a fuller's club beat out his brains.

The account of Josephus, the contemporary historian of the Jews, agrees well with this given by Christian writers. He mentions him by the name of "James the Just, the brother of Jesus, whom they call Christ." He says, that he was "brought forth, with certain others, and delivered to be stoned;" and he ascribes this violence to the Sadducees, to which party Ananus the high-priest belonged: adding, that he seized the opportunity of the interregnum of the Roman government, between the death of Festus and the arrival of Albanus. He relates, moreover, that the more strict observers of the law, by whom he doubtless means the Pharisees, were much offended at this act of the high-priest; and complained against it; and that the people saw, in the calamities which soon befell them, the Divine vengeance for the blood of this just person. Ananus was soon after displaced for Jesus, the son of Damneus.

About the time of the death of James, Jerusalem began to be a prey to those factions which never ceased but with the final destruction of the city and country. Albanus, the governor who succeeded Festus, was an abettor rather than a corrector of these disorders. "In fine," says Josephus, "there was not faith left upon earth; and the multiplicity of tyrants was evidently the foundation of a slavery to come<sup>1</sup>."

Such was the situation in which Paul found his unhappy nation, if he did reach it, as he intended, after his release from his first imprisonment at Rome. According to Dr. Hales, he left Rome about the spring of the year sixty-four, and returned thither in the end of the year, or in the beginning of sixty-five. We know it had been his intention to proceed into Spain; and an ancient author<sup>2</sup> asserts the fact, that he preached in the West, and that to its utmost extent; and another, that he went to the islands of the sea, and numbers Britons and Gauls among his disciples<sup>3</sup>. But the small space of time between his release and his death, and the mention of an eastern journey only, in his last

<sup>1</sup> Lib. xi. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Clemens Romanus.

<sup>3</sup> Theodoret.



epistle to Timothy, a little before that event, renders it hardly probable that he realized his intentions<sup>1</sup>.

The second epistle to Timothy describes the situation of Paul, as much more afflictive than during his first confinement at Rome. He “suffered trouble as an evil doer, even unto bonds<sup>2</sup> ;” — was confined in the manner in which the most atrocious criminals were secured ; very different from his former situation, when he dwelt in his own hired house, and all came to him that pleased. But now he praises it as an extraordinary kindness in Onesiphorus, that he was “not ashamed of his chain ;” but that when he was in Rome, he “sought him out diligently, and found him.” In some one of the many dungeons of Rome, therefore, few or none of his friends knew where, Paul was at this time immured. He has to complain too of the desertion of his followers ; especially he says, that when he was called to make his first defence, most probably at the imperial tribunal, “no man stood with me, but all forsook me : I pray God it may not be laid to their charge.” So that a panic seems to have seized the flock when their shepherd was threatened. The times indeed began to be very dangerous for the Christians at Rome ; and we plainly mark the rise of that public hatred against them, which soon burst forth with such violence. Paul describes his narrow escape at that time, and the rage of his persecutor, by saying, “I was delivered from the mouth of the lion !” When all forsook him, the Lord stood with him, and strengthened him ; so that, as he had done before, in the presence of Felix, of Festus, and of Agrippa, he was enabled to make a full statement of the Gospel of Christ, perhaps in the crowded court of the emperor himself<sup>3</sup>.

This refers to an examination which he had undergone a short time before he wrote to Timothy. He speaks of Luke as being the only person that was then with him ; but he expresses a wish for Mark to come to him immediately, as he would be useful to him for the ministry : which latter circumstance, and his wishing Timothy to come also, I think, may afford a proof that the general persecution, which happened before the close of the year, had not yet burst upon the church.

But Paul, though he had escaped at his first answer, is aware of a second appearance at Cesar’s tribunal, of the fatal issue of which he seems to have a presentiment : “I am now ready to

<sup>1</sup> See Hale’s Chronology, vol. iii. 1252.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Tim. ii. 9.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 17.

be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith : henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day ; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." We see how well the apostle is prepared for the event, and how glorious a hope animates his mind in the prospect of death !

There is every reason to conclude that it happened to Paul according to his anticipations ; that he was adjudged to death on his second appearance, either before the emperor or his delegates. The ancient tradition is, that he was beheaded.

It is also the uniform tradition of antiquity<sup>1</sup>, that Peter also fell by the same hand, and about the same time, as his brother apostle, Paul. No mention is made of Peter in the sacred writings, after the notice of his being at Antioch, in the epistle to the Galatians. The tradition at Antioch was, that Peter had sometime governed their church, and we may perhaps infer from his own epistle, that he had laboured in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.

What he means by Babylon, whence he writes his epistle, —“ the church which is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you, and so doth Marcus, my son,” —has been the occasion of some dispute. But every one who is acquainted with the ancient Scriptures, and with the Jewish writers, will perceive why that name should be given to Rome : that Rome was here intended, and that the Marcus mentioned, was the writer of the Gospel which bears his name, and whom Paul, as we have seen, a short time before his death, was expecting to come to him at Rome, is the general persuasion of the ancient writers<sup>2</sup>. All this corroborates the opinion, that Peter stood in Paul's place at Rome, shortly after his martyrdom, and was soon united with him in death. The tradition concerning Peter is, that he was crucified ; which agrees well with the prediction of our Lord : “ When thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thine hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not<sup>3</sup>.”

Soon after the martyrdom of St. Peter and St. Paul, the church of Rome was involved in a general and most cruel persecution. A dreadful fire had laid waste a great part of the city.

<sup>1</sup> See Lardner, Can. vol. iii. chap. 18.

<sup>2</sup> See Eusebius, lib. ii. cap. 15. and Lardner, Macknight, &c.

<sup>3</sup> John, xxi. 18.



The general character of the emperor, and his foolish conduct on the occasion, gave rise to some suspicions that he was the author of this calamity. He aimed, it was conjectured, at the glory of building a new city, to be called by his name. To divert these suspicions from himself, Nero caused the Christians to be accused as the incendiaries; they, as it appears, being at this time so obnoxious to the public hatred, that such an imputation was likely to be easily credited by the Roman people. The Christians were, accordingly, accused of the crime, and "subjected to the most exquisite torments," to extort confession.

This is the first occasion that the Roman historians, in writing the history of their country, have to note, that there were such a people as the Christians in existence; and it is mournfully interesting to observe, in what light they appeared in their eyes. It affords us an early warning, how little the most candid strangers are to be trusted, in the description of a people whom they know only from the reports of their adversaries, or contemplate through the veil of prejudice and contempt. The celebrated Tacitus gives the following account of the persons suspected on this occasion: "They were commonly called Christians;"—"they were persons odious for their scandalous vices." "The author of this name," he tells us, "was Christus, who, in the reign of Tiberius, had been executed as a criminal by the procurator Pontius Pilate. The pernicious [or *pestilent*] superstition, was indeed, for the present, suppressed, but again burst forth, not only throughout Judea, where the evil originated, but throughout the city of Rome also, whither whatever is enormously wicked and shameful, is sure to flow from all parts of the world, and to be received and practised with encouragement. Such as openly avowed themselves were accordingly," he says, "first apprehended, and afterwards an immense multitude, from their testimony: they were convicted, but not so much for setting fire to the city, as of ill-will" or "enmity to the human race<sup>1</sup>. Sport was made of them in putting them to death. They were either covered with the skins of wild beasts, and torn to pieces by dogs, or were fastened to crosses, or wrapped up in combustibles, in order that when daylight should fail, they might be burnt, and serve for nocturnal lamps. Nero offered his gardens for the spectacle, and gave notice for the games of the circus, at which he appeared in the habit of a charioteer, mixing with the crowd, and standing up in his chariot to engage in the race. Hence it happened," continues

<sup>1</sup> "Odio humani generis."

the historian, "that the sufferers, guilty as they were, and deserving of the most severe and exemplary punishments, became the objects of pity, since they were considered as destroyed, not for the public good, but to gratify the savage cruelty of an individual." Such is the account of Tacitus. Suetonius, another Roman historian of eminence, takes notice of this horrid barbarity, in terms which clearly shew, that he had formed the same opinion of the despised sufferers: "The Christians were punished; a kind of men who followed a new and mischievous superstition<sup>1</sup>."

In the subsequent part of our narrative, we shall sometimes be held in doubt respecting the real character of some that suffer in the Christian cause; having only the misrepresentations of their accusers, or reason to suspect the partial accounts of injudicious friends. But these are some of the very persons of whom St. Paul, but six years before, speaks, as those "whose faith was spoken of throughout the whole world;" for whom he could thank God, "that they had obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered to them;" and being then "made free from sin, had become the servants of righteousness;" — their "obedience had come abroad to all men<sup>2</sup>."

Such, then, was the end of them that "were at Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints;" and such the estimation in which they, whom God approved, were held by their fellow-citizens! So soon did the followers of Jesus experience the truth of their Divine Master's warning: "Marvel not if the world hate you: I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: — then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you; and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake!" And it should be particularly observed, that it was in the face of this dreadful calamity so soon to befall them, that the Holy Ghost inspires the apostle to say, "he reckoned, that the sufferings of this present time were not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us<sup>3</sup>." In these circumstances was the glorious challenge put into the mouths of these Roman Christians: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, for thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter." "Nay, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through him that loved us<sup>4</sup>." No records, indeed, remain of the last hours and

<sup>1</sup> "Malefica."

<sup>2</sup> Rom. viii. 18.

<sup>3</sup> See Epistle to the Romans.

<sup>4</sup> Rom. viii. 35, &c.

dying sayings of these holy martyrs, nor could such have been easily collected in the tumultuous scenes of that dreadful night; but we may feel assured they found the promise true, and experienced, in the support afforded them in that conflict, that they needed “not fear them that kill the body.” Their triumphant souls soon escaped from the riotous uproar of their pitiless persecutors, and found rest in a better world.

The opinion that had been formed of the Christians, and of their religion, is truly striking. They were persons “odious for their scandalous vice; their religion a pestilent or pernicious superstition:” they were reckoned among things “most atrocious and shameful.” And this is not the opinion of some vulgar or narrow-minded person, but of a most accomplished, and as would be supposed, well-informed author, to this day highly celebrated as the discriminating historian of men and manners: yet, even Tacitus can write for the information of posterity, that these Christians — little was he aware how great that name was one day to become — though not satisfactorily convicted of the burning of Rome, were justly convicted of the “hatred of their kind;” and that although the cruelty of their sufferings, or rather the act of tyranny by which they perished, caused them to be pitied, they were “guilty and deserved to be punished.” After this early specimen of the hatred and ill-treatment which the followers of the Lamb received from an unbelieving world, we need not wonder at the subsequent persecutions of the church; or at those risings of enmity and prejudice, which, to this day, the contemplation of spiritual religion will sometimes create; and which, though all public persecution has ceased, do still embitter the life of many a child of God in the private intercourse of society.

The same hour was the season of vengeance to the Jewish church and the Jewish people<sup>1</sup>. The war that ended in the total destruction of the city, broke out this year, through the cruelty and oppression of the Roman governor Florus, on the one hand, and the infatuation of a ruling party among the Jews, on the other. The city was torn to pieces by sedition and factions which were more cruel to each other than the common enemy. The Jewish historian is of opinion, that if the Roman general Cestius, who advanced with an army before Jerusalem, had at this time attacked the city, he might easily have taken it, and put an end to the war at once: “but,” he remarks, “God, for the wickedness of the people, suffered not the war to come to an

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 65.

end at that time." The seditious, taking courage again, pursued Cestius in his retreat, and at length routed his army with great slaughter. This was the crisis of their fate; they had now provoked, beyond reconciliation, the vengeance of the all-powerful Romans. "After the disaster of Cestius, many of the distinguished Jews," Josephus observes, "left the city as a sinking ship<sup>1</sup>." Among these, we know, were the Christians: our Lord, in his prophecies concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, had given them warning to do so<sup>2</sup>. Eusebius also writes, that the congregation of the faithful in Jerusalem, was commanded, by an oracle revealed to the best approved among them, that before the wars began, they should depart the city, and inhabit a village beyond Jordan, called Pella."

This he seems to reckon as the occasion when the surviving apostles were driven out of Judea, and sent, by the power of Christ, to preach to all nations<sup>3</sup>; and he relates, as the current report, that the apostles and disciples of the Lord, with his kinsmen, assembled to appoint a successor to James, and made choice of Simeon, the son of Cleophas, whom all antiquity has esteemed as "the second bishop" of this church.

It belongs not to the historian of the church of Christ, to detail the circumstances of the calamitous destruction of Jerusalem and of the Jews. All the dreadful circumstances mentioned in the Scripture prophecies, were fulfilled in the very letter. After Cestius had so unsuccessfully conducted the Jewish war, and had died of disease or grief, Nero appointed Vespasian, a commander of great celebrity, to assume the command of the army; and, in the space of two years<sup>4</sup>, the vengeance of the Romans had reduced all the country, except Jerusalem itself. That city, in the mean time, was suffering more from the cruelty and rage of the fanatic factions within its walls, than almost any enemy could have inflicted upon it. Vespasian, when he was advised by his officers to hasten the attack on the city, is said to have replied, "it was far better to let the Jews destroy each other<sup>5</sup>."

The death of the emperor Nero, with the civil war which followed in Italy, between the contending parties of Galba, Otho, and Vitellius<sup>6</sup>, afforded a short cessation of hostilities on the part of the Romans, but without at all abating the animosity

<sup>1</sup> Bell. Jud. ii. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Lib. iii. cap. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Bell. Jud. iii. 6.

<sup>4</sup> Luke, xxi. 20, 21.

<sup>5</sup> A. D. 67, 68.

<sup>6</sup> A. D. 68.

of the Jews. At length, Vespasian was himself saluted emperor by his army in Judea, and departed for Rome, leaving his son Titus to carry on the war.

Titus advanced with an army of sixty thousand Romans<sup>1</sup>, and laid siege to Jerusalem. It was at the time of the passover, in April, when multitudes of Jews from all parts were inclosed in the devoted city; thus increasing the horrors of the famine, as well as multiplying the victims of the sword, and making the fall of the city a still more national calamity. The city and the temple were taken and destroyed in the following September. Nothing ever described by the pen of the historian, can exceed, in the sum of human wretchedness and misery, what was endured by the besieged in the devoted city of Jerusalem during this period. Titus himself owned the hand of God in his victory, and in the madness of the enemy that rendered it so fatal and destructive.

Thus fell Jerusalem, and her children within her, thirty years after the prospect of these calamities had drawn tears from the eyes of our merciful Saviour.

We could wish to have been able to trace the journeys of the apostles and disciples of the Lord, during these eventful years which drove them from the land of their nativity; but very little, which is considered authentic, is left on record. Eusebius mentions, as a tradition, that "Thomas chose Parthia; Andrew, Scythia; John, Asia, where he abode, and died at Ephesus<sup>2</sup>." Concerning this latter apostle and his ministry, which closes the apostolic age, we shall have more to say hereafter from the inspired records themselves. But there appears a chasm in the ecclesiastical memoirs of these times, of more than twenty years, which tradition enables us very imperfectly to fill up. Vespasian reigned ten years, and was succeeded by his son Titus. In the second year of this prince, died Linus, after he had been bishop of Rome twelve years, and was succeeded by Anacletus. Titus reigned only two years and two months, and left the imperial crown to his brother Domitian. In the fourth year of his reign, Anianus the first bishop of Alexandria died, having presided in that church thirty-two years, and was followed by Abilius. To Anacletus, bishop of Rome, succeeded Clemens, in the twelfth year of Domitian<sup>3</sup>. If we add to this account what the same author relates in another place<sup>4</sup>, concerning the suc-

<sup>1</sup> A. D. 70.

<sup>2</sup> Lib. iii. xiii. xiv.

<sup>3</sup> Eusebius, iii. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Cap. 19.

cession of the chief pastors at Antioch, "that the first was known to be Evodius, the second Ignatius," we have the whole tradition of the apostolic succession in the three great cities of the Roman empire, Rome, Antioch, and Alexandria. Of these primitive Roman bishops, Linus is incidentally mentioned by St. Paul; and Clemens also, with this addition: "My fellow-labourer," "whose name is in the book of life<sup>1</sup>."

Two epistles of this early father, written to the church of the Corinthians, are extant; the former of which, especially, was in high estimation with the primitive Christians. It appears by this epistle, that the schismatical spirit which, in the lifetime of St. Paul, had been reprov'd in this church of Corinth, and it should seem, in a considerable degree, suppressed by his authority, had again burst forth, and had thrown the church into the greatest disorder. "The haughty disorderly leaders of the abominable schism," as Clement describes them, "had prevailed even to the exclusion of some faithful pastors from the ministry!" Referring to St. Paul's epistle, he says, "Take up the writings of the blessed apostle; what did he say to you in the beginning of the Gospel? Truly, by Divine inspiration, he gave you direction concerning himself, and Cephas and Apollos, because even then you were splitting into parties. Your party spirit at that time had less evil in it, because it was exercised in favour of apostles of eminent holiness, and of one much approved by them. But now consider who they are that have subverted you, and broken the bonds of brotherly love. These are shameful things, brethren, most shameful! Oh, tell it not on Christian ground, that the ancient and flourishing church of Corinth have quarrell'd with their pastors, from a weak partiality for one or two persons." Perhaps the language of Clement, which is rather of a rhetorical cast, has painted the disturbance, which gave occasion to his letter, in its most glaring colours: he evidently writes not without a hope that his messenger may bring him back news of their concord.

The emperors Vespasian and Titus had been guilty of no oppression towards the Christians. Domitian, however, inherited the hatred and hostility of Nero against them, but seems, at length, to have relented in his persecutions, and recalled the exiles. The prophecies, which, as we have noticed before, were current in this age, respecting "a great king" and "mighty conqueror" to be born in the East, had disturbed the repose of

<sup>1</sup> Phil. iv.



the Roman emperor; or, at least, the known application of the prediction by the Christians to Christ, had, in some measure, excited his suspicions; he therefore caused some surviving descendants of the family of David to be brought before him: the nephews of Judas, called the brother of our Lord after the flesh, are mentioned as the persons found. When they were questioned concerning Christ and his kingdom, they replied, that "his kingdom was not of this world,"—an earthly kingdom; "but was an heavenly kingdom, which should be at the consummation of the world, when he, coming in his glory, should judge the quick and the dead, and render to every man according to his works." This testimony, and the evident poverty of the relations of our Lord,—their hands rough with labour,—allayed all the suspicions of the emperor<sup>1</sup>.

A Roman lady of high birth, Flavia, the daughter of Flavius Clementus, who had been one of the consuls, is recorded to have been banished in this persecution, into the Isle of Pontia, for the testimony of Christ. But a similar disposal of the ancient and only surviving apostle, John, must now call our attention to the last portion of the inspired writings, and to the close of the apostolic age.

St. John was exiled into "the isle which is called Patmos, for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus," about the close of the reign of Domitian<sup>2</sup>. This is the last incident of the Scripture story. The aged apostle is reported, after his release from banishment, to have retired to Ephesus, and there to have died, about the close of the first century. Of the writings of St. John, the epistles are generally considered as the first in date<sup>3</sup>; the Gospel, as well as the Revelation, being referred to a very late period of his life. His first epistle, if the piece is indeed of that character, is written chiefly with the design of counteracting certain rising heresies, in the worst sense of that term, which were now beginning to assail the purity of the Christian faith; and it is recorded by some among the ancients, that the apostle had a similar design in writing a fourth Gospel.

Various as were the shades of distinction between these early seducers, they were at first reducible to two great classes, the Docetæ or Gnostics, and the Ebionites. The Gnostics denied

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius, Tertullian, Hegesippus.

<sup>2</sup> A. D. 96.

<sup>3</sup> Mill and Le Clerc, A. D. 91 or 92 — Basnage, 98 — Whiston, 81 or 82 — Lardner, A. D. 80, or later.

the real humanity of our Lord, and asserted that he died only in appearance; the Ebionites asserted that the Saviour was a mere man, at least denying his Godhead. Against both these errors the Epistle and Gospel are explicit in their statements. As to the reality of the 'manhood' of Christ, which the heresy the most extensive, denied, the aged apostle could speak of what his "eyes had seen and his hands had handled;" he had contemplated him during a long intercourse with him, and knew that he was indeed and in reality "come in the flesh;" he had contemplated him dying upon the cross, he had heard his loud cry,—and had seen the blood and water streaming from his pierced side; he had handled him after his resurrection, before his glorification, and convinced himself, as did all the disciples, that he was 'not a spirit,' but 'had flesh and bones.' He saw Thomas put his fingers in the prints of the nails and the spear. Against those who said he was only a common man, or that his person was the habitation of an angelic or a super-angelic spirit, and was not an incarnation of the true and very God, the apostle asserts, in the opening of his Gospel, that the Word, who was with God, and was God, who created all things, and sustained all things,—that very "Word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst" them. So that the truth both of the Redeemer's, manhood and of his Godhead was fully vindicated; and, at the same time, the reality of his incarnation—that 'of God and man was made one Christ, who truly suffered, was dead and buried.'

But errors in the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel are rarely single. None of the heretics held the doctrine of the *atonement* and of *justification by faith in the righteousness of God our Saviour*; and the rejection of this doctrine was, perhaps, the source of their error concerning the person of Christ. No doctrine but this requires, if we may so speak, the expensive apparatus of the incarnation of him that was truly God; and accordingly, we generally find, that those who are unsound on the article of justification by faith, if they do hold, speculatively, the doctrines of the Trinity and of the incarnation, do not maintain them with that supreme deference and dread, which would keep them "whole and undefiled," on the peril of eternal ruin—inasmuch as those that believe them not, "are fallen from grace!" The truth is, their system of doctrine and their hope of salvation could stand without these doctrines; but that of the orthodox Christian cannot. For an example of a pious life—of a good man suffering in patience—or, in order to give



a pledge of the resurrection of the dead, the incarnation of the Deity, were certainly unnecessary. So the Ebionites thought, and their system was but the error of the pharisaical heresy, which Paul had termed "poor and beggarly elements," grown to its full form<sup>1</sup>. They were of the circumcision, and held justification by the works of the law. They accordingly rejected the epistles of St. Paul, and deemed him an apostate from the law and the prophets<sup>2</sup>.

The Docetæ, or Gnostics, to whom, it is said, belonged Simon Magus, Menander, Cerinthus, and others, were a very numerous and extensive sect, and branched out afterwards into a variety of ramifications. They were called Gnostics, or "men of knowledge," from their arrogating to themselves alone the true knowledge of God and spiritual things. They had embraced a system, that had been invented among the philosophers of the East, a leading principle of which was, that all matter—the world's and human bodies—was essentially evil; not the workmanship of the true God, but the creation of an evil spirit, who with his genii ruled over it. The Gnostics, who professed themselves Christians, wickedly confounded this evil architect of the universe, with the God of the Old Testament. Christ they considered as an emanation from the supreme God, and they had 'endless genealogies' about the emanations from the Deity; but they abhorred the idea that he had really taken a material body upon him, all matter with them being intrinsically evil. They taught that Christ was come to destroy the dominion of the god and maker of this world, not by becoming a sacrifice for sins, and a regenerating principle for the purifying and redemption both of soul and body, but, by the instructions of a new discipline, to free, through their own exertions, the immaterial spirits of men from that bondage to which they were subjected in consequence of their union with material bodies; and thus to raise them to the knowledge and contemplation of the true God. The doctrine of a resurrection of the body they of course denied, or explained away; and all their religion consisted in abstinence and self-mortification, and the affected abstraction of the mind from all material things; since, according to their notions of the origin of our corporeal frames, to obey any instinct of nature, or to indulge in any sort of bodily gratification, was contrary to reason, and criminal. Hence, the

<sup>1</sup> Ebionite is derived from a term which signifies 'poor, beggarly.'

<sup>2</sup> Eusebius.

generality of them were a set of very austere and gloomy mystics, commanding indeed the admiration of the ignorant, by their apparent self-denial, their mortified habits, and most sanctimonious demeanour; but utter strangers to the sanctifying influences of the Spirit of Christ.

Such were the generality of these heretical teachers, and to such St. Paul alludes in several places. But others of them had drawn different conclusions from the same premises; they inferred that the immaterial spirit in man could not be defiled by the deeds of the body, nor was it amenable for its actions; and accordingly they felt themselves warranted to indulge in every species of libidinous excess. Thus, on the one hand, the true holiness of the Christian, and the mortification of sinful affections, enjoined in the Gospel discipline, became opposed by a counterfeit of much louder pretensions—for even perfection was believed to be attainable; and, on the other hand, the liberty of the Gospel might be confounded with this “cloak of maliciousness,” and interpreted as affording “an occasion to the flesh<sup>1</sup>.”

Respecting both these classes of Gnostics—men of knowledge “falsely so called,”—both the mystic perfectionist, and the Gnostic antinomian,—many precepts in this first epistle of St. John are delivered. “The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin”—“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us”—“If we say that we have not sinned, we make” God “a liar”—“He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk as he walked”—“He that saith I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him”—“He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.” It was with respect to these antinomian seducers, who were, on principle, avowed apologists for sin, that St. John uses that remarkable language,—in other circumstances inapplicable to frail man,—“Whosoever abideth in him, sinneth not; whosoever sinneth, hath not seen him, neither known him”—“Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God,” &c. &c.

These things the apostle “wrote concerning those that would seduce them.” He tells them that “it is the last time; and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now there are many antichrists; thereby we know that it is the last time.”

<sup>1</sup> See Mosheim de Rebus Christianorum.

St. John means, it is the last period of the dispensation of the Gospel: Christ's second coming was to be preceded by that notorious person, the "man of sin," "that wicked one,"—the great opposer or supplanter of Christ—and there were already many that answered to that description. This would soon lead to that state of the church, which would only give place to the coming of Christ. St. John says of these false teachers, "They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they doubtless would have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." He does not hesitate also to say to the real Christian brethren, "But ye have an unction of the Holy One, and ye know all things"—"ye know that no lie is of the truth." All, therefore, who were sealed by the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, would be safe from these delusions.

The book of the Revelation, which closes the sacred volume, though filled chiefly with prophecies of the future, contains an important document for completing the history of the church in the apostolic times, as it exhibits a view of the state of religion at that time in seven of the Asiatic churches, and of the members of these churches, as societies or bodies politic; the public character of the society is also given, and in many respects with strong expressions of disapprobation.

From a perusal of this part of the sacred writings, we perceive how varied was the face of religion, in seven of the primitive churches, at the close of the apostolic age, as exposed to the scrutiny of the Divine inspection. Individual churches, as to their associate character, differed much from each other, in their degrees of purity and spirituality. None were absolutely "fallen from grace,"—the profession of its doctrine; they were still candlesticks in the sanctuary, and their ministers stars in the right hand of the Saviour; but the causes which might operate to their rejection, were pointed out in several of them. In the worst of them, however, a faithful few were found, whom the Lord knew how to preserve in the midst of a corrupted society; but not the least intimation is given, that they were free from their religious allegiance to their respective churches and pastors, or that they might form themselves into new and purer societies. Such a procedure, unless where foundations are cast down, can certainly plead no scriptural warrant.

Two institutions of the church, referred to apostolic times by the general voice of antiquity, seem to be confirmed in their claims to this high authority, by what we find in this part of the

**Revelation :—**the consecration of the first day of the week as the Christian sabbath—and the appointment, in individual churches, of an order of pastors superior to presbyters. St. John calls the day on which he saw the heavenly vision, “the Lord’s day<sup>1</sup>.” And each of the epistles to the seven churches is addressed, not to the presbyters, nor to the presbyters and the people, but to an individual — “to the angel of the church,” &c. And these angels, or messengers of God, are considered, in some sort, as the representatives of their respective churches, and are symbolically distinguished as “stars in the right hand of Christ.” This, when compared with what is said respecting ‘James and the presbytery,’ in the church of Jerusalem, and with the tradition and uniform practice of the universal church in all ages, certainly establishes on very high grounds, the claims of the episcopal office, as it is now termed, to be of apostolic origin.

We cannot, indeed, define from Scripture, the prerogatives and legal rights of this high office, any more than we can ascertain with what solemnities and degree of sanctity the holy rest of the Christian sabbath was observed in the apostles’ time ; but the existence of the two institutions, bearing some analogy to what they were known to be in subsequent ages, may fairly be inferred.

To conclude the history of the apostolic age, and of the first century. Very nearly with its close, St. John is thought to have finished his protracted life and ministry. As in the book of Joshua we read, “Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the Lord that he had done for Israel,” implying, that soon after that, their corruptions began to take place ; so, Hegesippus remarks, “Unto those times” — about the year one hundred and ten — “the church of God remained a pure and uncorrupted virgin : for such as endeavoured to corrupt the perfect rule, and sound preaching of the word — if then there were any such — hid themselves until that time in some secret and obscure place ; but after that the sacred company of the apostles was worn out and come to an end, and that generation was entirely spent, which by special favour had heard with their ears the heavenly wisdom of the Son of God, then the conspiracy of detestable error, through deceit of such as deli-

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius, when describing the Ebionites, says, that, at the same time they observed the Jewish sabbath, they celebrated Sunday, in memory of our Lord’s resurrection, like the church. — *E. H.* lib. iii. xxiv.

vered strange doctrine, took root. And because not one of the apostles survived, they published boldly, as far as they could, the doctrine of falsehood, and impugned the open, manifest, and known truth<sup>1</sup>."

The words of this author are thought to apply particularly to the church of Jerusalem; but they may serve as a warning as to what we have to expect in the history of the visible church universal, soon after this period, though with different degrees of progress in different communities.

## CHAPTER THE SECOND.

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH UNDER THE MINISTRY OF THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS, AND THEIR SURVIVERS AND IMMEDIATE SUCCESSORS: FALLING IN NEARLY WITH THE SECOND CENTURY OF THE CHRISTIAN ERA. THE AGE OF IGNATIUS, POLYCARP, &c.

THE Church of Christ, whose rise we have seen in the last chapter, was now become a very widely extended body; and those who sowed the good seed, were gone forth into all nations. "The field was" now "the world;" in every part the good seed was sown; and every where, as we shall soon have occasion to lament, tares that an enemy had sown, sprang up with it.

The situation of the civilised parts of the earth was, at this time, very favourable for the planting of a universal church. The Roman arms had nearly subdued all the principal nations, and had formed them into one great state. From the remotest parts of the empire public roads had been opened, and an easy intercourse established between the sovereign city and all her dependent provinces. The world had never before presented such a scene in the history of mankind; and we cannot but see the overruling hand of a Divine Providence in this, "who hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation<sup>2</sup>."

The times of ignorance had been long. God had suffered all nations to walk in their own ways, but he now "visited them to take out of them a people for his name;" and accordingly a command had been issued from his throne, that "all men every

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius, iii. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Acts, xvii.

where should repent, and turn from their vanities unto the living God which made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein"—“because he had appointed a day in which he would judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he had ordained: whereof he had given assurance unto all, in that he had raised him from the dead.” Witnesses of these things, who were properly accredited of God, were now travelling through the world in all directions; and, in the measure that his wisdom saw expedient, were endowed with the power of working miracles. If idolatry and every transgression of the moral law were before inexcusable, as the Scripture assures us they were<sup>1</sup>,—because God had never left himself ‘without witness’ “of his eternal power and Godhead, and because ‘the matter of that law’ was written upon the heart of every intelligent creature,—the world would now become far more inexcusable, if, persisting in their unbelief and viciousness, and their abominable idolatries, they repented not, and obeyed not the Gospel of the Son of God.

The work, therefore, in which the successors of the apostles were left engaged, was to preach the Gospel in every nation, and establish a universal church, as the God of all grace should bless their efforts. In order to trace their progress and various success, from age to age, in the different parts of the world, it will be useful so far to note, briefly, the leading events and passing occurrences of the times, as may serve to connect the history of the church of God, with the epochas and eras of the general history of mankind.

## SECT. I.

The Roman empire, or what was nearly the same thing, the civilised world, had been, from a little before the birth of Christ, governed by a succession of princes who were invested with the most absolute power: the names of these emperors have all occurred in the former part of our history. Domitian, the last who was mentioned, and who is remembered in the church by his banishing of the aged apostle John to the Isle of Patmos, soon afterwards<sup>2</sup> met with death by violence. He was succeeded by Nerva, a mild and feeble old man, whose short reign of two years was in itself of small importance in the history of the world; but his advanced age, and the necessities of the times,

<sup>1</sup> Rom. i.

<sup>2</sup> A. D. 96.

led him to adopt a measure which not only restored the vigour of the Imperial government, but, in its consequences, introduced a new era, the most prosperous the Roman state was ever to enjoy. Disregarding every other motive, with the sole view of the public good, he made choice of Trajan, a favourite general in his armies, to be his colleague and successor in the empire.

Mr. Gibbon remarks that “The principal conquests of the Romans were achieved under the republic.” “Augustus relinquished the ambition of conquest” — “his moderate system was adopted by his successors; and such, with the single exception of the conquest of Britain,” were the maxims of imperial polity, from the death of Augustus to the accession of Trajan. That virtuous and active prince had received the education of a soldier, and possessed the talents of a general. The peaceful system of his predecessors, was interrupted by scenes of war and conquest, and the legions, after a long interval, beheld a military emperor at their head. By the arms of Trajan, the Roman conquests were carried to their utmost extent, both in the East and in the West; and the strength and order given to the Imperial government, had a lasting effect upon the internal peace and prosperity of the empire<sup>1</sup>. Trajan, after a reign of ten years, was succeeded by Adrian<sup>2</sup>, who reigned twenty years, and left his government to Antoninus Pius<sup>3</sup>, who reigned twenty-four years, and his son Marcus Antoninus eighteen years<sup>4</sup>. “During a happy period,” observes Mr. Gibbon, “of more than fourscore years, the public administration was conducted by the virtues and abilities of Nerva, Trajan, Adrian, and the two Antonines.” The infidel historian seems to single out this period, as that in which, before all others, a wise man would wish to have lived. But the annals of the church of Christ during this era, though little has been preserved, are sufficient to shew, that if the world rejoiced, they had cause to weep and lament; and could have no relief for their sorrow, but in Him who had promised to turn that sorrow into joy.

Under Nerva, as we have seen, the church had rest, and the last of the apostles, having been restored from exile, died in peace. But Trajan had conceived a great hatred against the Christian name, and he and his successors, how eminent soever they may appear in profane history, as civil governors, must, in

<sup>1</sup> This era, introduced by the exaltation and victorious career of Trajan, I believe to have been predicted by the First Seal. Rev. vi. 2.

<sup>2</sup> A. D. 117.

<sup>3</sup> A. D. 137.

<sup>4</sup> A. D. 179.



general, be ranked in the history of the church, as persecutors of the flock of Christ. It is true, these princes do not always appear as the instigators of the persecution; they sometimes interfere to regulate, and even to moderate, the hatred of the world against the people of God, and to check the fury of the pagan priests and multitude; but hardly ever as protectors of the innocent, or as affording any toleration to the professors of the hated opinions.

This is shewn by the most important document now extant concerning the Christians in this age, a letter of the celebrated Pliny<sup>1</sup> to the emperor Trajan, with his answer to the same. Pliny had been appointed to the government of Bithynia, in the Lesser Asia; a part of the world in which, we have reason to conclude, Christians more abounded at this time than in any other. He writes to the emperor, in order that he may resolve certain doubts, as to the proper method of proceeding against these people, having never been present at the trial of a Christian, before he came into the province. Among the questions he ventures to suggest, are the following: “Whether no distinction is to be made between the young and the old, the tender and the robust?”—“whether pardon should be granted on repentance—or whether he who had ever been a Christian, should have no advantage from his having ceased to be such?”—“whether the profession itself, or the crimes attached to it, should be made the object of punishment?”

Pliny says, he “greatly hesitated on these points,” which plainly discovers what he had found to be the common practice; and though his mind in some degree revolted from it, he hardly durst express his disapprobation. He tells the emperor the mode of proceeding which he had for the present adopted; a mode sufficiently harsh, and clearly indicative of the general abhorrence in which the Christian name was held!

“I have asked them whether they were Christians? If they confessed, I have asked them a second and a third time with a threat of punishment: if they persevered, I have ordered them to be led to execution. For of this I had no doubt, that, whatever it was they persisted in maintaining, such stubbornness and unbending obstinacy ought to be punished.” The pagan magistrate, it is evident, could form no conception of a man’s making it a point of conscience not to deny his religion at the peril of his life. “There were others,” he continues, “possessed of a

<sup>1</sup> A. D. 106 or 107.



similar madness, whom because they were Roman citizens, I ordered to be sent to Rome. Soon after I had taken this business in hand, however, criminations, as is usual, multiplied upon me, and many particular cases occurred. A list without a signature, containing the names of many persons, was presented: those who denied that they were, or had been Christians, when they had repeated after me the invocation of the gods, and had supplicated with wine and incense your image—which, for this purpose, I had ordered to be brought among the statues of the deities,—and when they had cursed Christ,—none of which things, it is said, those who are real Christians can possibly be compelled to do,—them I dismissed: others named by the accuser, at first said they were Christians, but afterwards denied it; declaring that they had indeed been Christians, but had ceased to be so;—some three years since, some more, some even twenty years ago: all worshipped your image, and the statues of the gods: these too cursed Christ.” “They continued, however, to affirm that this had been the whole of their offence or error, that they had been accustomed to assemble together on a stated day”—the Lord’s day, no doubt—“before it was light, and recite a hymn together—or chant in responsive choirs—to Christ as to a god<sup>1</sup>. That they bound themselves, indeed, by a solemn oath,”—to *their Leader*—“not,” as their accusers asserted, “to commit any wickedness;” *but*—“not to steal, or rob, or commit adultery, not to violate a promise or deny a pledge. That after this, their custom had been to separate, and again to assemble together to eat food, but of a common and harmless kind;” that is, not as the pagans reported, that in these feasts the Christians ate their children, and were guilty of every abomination;—“and that they had desisted from the practice altogether, after my edict, according to your order, forbidding associations.”

These common meals were clearly the Christian love-feasts, which are mentioned in the epistle to the Corinthians, and which, if Paul had abolished them, for special reasons, at Corinth, were still, it seems, in use in this part of the world. The Christians, however, deemed it proper to obey the command of the

<sup>1</sup> The expression is “*carmen dicere secum invicem*,” which has been thought capable of more than one interpretation. Mosheim thinks it might refer to a form of prayer, similar to that now in use, of repeating the words after the minister, with the concluding Amen. Perhaps it was that mode of singing, which Eusebius describes as used by the primitive Christians, in their vigils; one singing a part and the whole assembly uniting in the chorus. Lib. xi. 17.

civil magistrate, in the discontinuance of these feasts, as they formed no essential part of their religious profession, though they were ready to go to prison and to death rather than deny their Master.

The virtuous Pliny, for his character has been blazoned with all the virtues of the pagan morality, could hardly credit this account of the inoffensive nature of a religion, so much the object of public odium. He tells the emperor, " I believed it, therefore, to be the more necessary, in order to find out the truth, to subject to torture, two attending females, whom they called deaconesses<sup>1</sup>; but I could discover nothing else but an erroneous and immoderate superstition. Deferring, therefore, the investigation, I have had recourse to your advice; for it appeared to me a thing worthy of consultation, especially on account of the number of persons involved. For many persons, of every age, and of every class, and of both sexes, are already, and many more will be, endangered. The contagion of this superstition has spread, not only through the towns, but also through the villages and country. That it may be stopped and corrected seems possible: so far is certain, that the temples, lately almost desolate, now begin to be frequented; the sacred solemnities, for a long time intermitted, to be again observed; and the victims, which heretofore could scarcely find a purchaser, now every where to be bought up. From whence it may easily be supposed, how great a multitude might be recovered if this repentance were accepted."

The emperor's answer fully approves of what Pliny had done. He directs that the Christians should not be sought after by the magistrate; but, if any are brought before him and convicted, that they should be punished. If, however, they denied that they were Christians, and would give the requisite proof of this, by supplicating the gods, whatever suspicions attached to them for their former conduct, this retractation was to secure their pardon. The mode of crimination by an anonymous libel, he reprobates in all cases. But the crime of being a Christian, was still, on conviction, a capital offence by the laws of the empire; nor would accusers fail to be found against a people who had so many malicious and interested enemies.

Simeon, the son of Cleophas, bishop of Jerusalem, suffered

<sup>1</sup> For the institution of these, whose office would still be of the utmost benefit to the younger females, instructed in the church of Christ, see St. Paul's first epistle to Timothy, chap. iii. 11. compared with chap. v. 3. &c.

martyrdom in this reign, having been accused, by certain heretics, before Atticus, the Roman consul. He was now an old man, a hundred and twenty years of age; and having been several times scourged, surprised the consul in being able to sustain the infliction, and was barbarously ordered by him to be crucified. Simeon was succeeded by Justus, one of the circumcision who believed in Christ<sup>1</sup>. In the third year of this reign died Clement, bishop of Rome, after "he had governed the church and preached the word of God nine years;" having committed the ministry to Evaristus, who governed eight years, and was succeeded by Alexander, the eighth bishop of that church. Primus is mentioned as being at this time the fourth bishop of Alexandria.

Of these primitive bishops, even in these great cities, the names only are recorded; but the see of Antioch was at this time filled by a man of eminence among the fathers of the church, both on account of his sufferings, and his writings, which have survived. This was Ignatius, the second, as we have seen, in succession from the apostles, and appointed, during their lifetime, bishop of Antioch. He had presided in that church thirty-seven years, when Trajan, in the tenth year of his reign, entered that city in his way to Parthia<sup>2</sup>. Ignatius came voluntarily into his presence, hoping, it is said, by the sacrifice of himself, to divert the emperor's wrath from his flock.

Trajan addressed him in no very mild terms:—"What an evil demon art thou! daring to transgress our commands, and to persuade others to perish miserably." Ignatius replied:—"Theophorus<sup>3</sup> ought not to be called evil demon; forasmuch as demons are departed from the servants of God. But if you call me impious because I am hostile to demons, I own the charge; for I dissolve their snares, having Christ the heavenly King." "Who is Theophorus?" demanded the emperor. "He who has Christ in his breast," was the reply of Ignatius. "And thinkest thou not," rejoined Trajan, "that the gods reside in us also, who fight for us against our enemies?" "You mistake," replied the holy father, "in calling the demons of the nations by the name of gods; for there is only one God, who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them; and one Jesus Christ, his only-begotten Son—whose kingdom be my portion!" "*His* kingdom, say you," replied

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius.<sup>2</sup> A. D. 107.<sup>3</sup> ' Bearing God.'

the emperor, "who was crucified under Pontius Pilate?" "His, who crucified my sin with its author, and has put all demoniacal fraud and malice under the feet of them who carry Him in their hearts!" "Dost thou carry the crucified within thee?" "I do; for it is written, *I will dwell in them, and walk in them.*" Trajan then pronounced this sentence against him: "Since Ignatius confesses, that he carries within himself *Him* that was crucified, we command that he be carried bound by soldiers to great Rome, there to be thrown to the wild beasts for the entertainment of the people."

Accordingly, Ignatius was sent towards Rome. At Smyrna, where the ship in which he sailed was delayed, he saw Polycarp, his fellow-disciple under the apostle John, who was bishop of the church at that place, and of whom we shall have more to say in a subsequent page. Many bishops, priests, and deacons, sent from the Asiatic churches, assembled to converse with him whom they seemed to regard as a champion of the Christian cause. After many delays, being impatient to reach the scene of his martyrdom, and to depart and be with Christ, he reached Rome. When he was led to execution, he is described as praying to the Son of God on behalf of the churches. He was thrown to the wild beasts in the midst of the amphitheatre, and the few bones of him that were left, were carefully gathered up by the deacons, and afterwards buried at Antioch.

The letters of this truly apostolic father, most of which were written during his voyage to Rome, are another important document of this age. When at Smyrna, he wrote to the churches of Ephesus, Magnesia, Thralles, and Rome. His address to the Ephesians reminds us of St. Peter's address in his first epistle: "Blessed in the majesty and fulness of God the Father, predestinated before the world to be always unto glory, *which is permanent,*" &c. He speaks in high commendation of Onesimus, perhaps the very person mentioned by St. Paul, whom he calls their "bishop in the flesh;" he speaks also of their "being subject to the bishop and presbytery," as becoming the glory of Christ and the sacred character of a Christian. He praises their harmony in this respect; and, adverting to the truly spiritual friendship which, in a few days' acquaintance, he had contracted for Onesimus, he deems them happy in possessing him, and certainly uses very decisive language concerning the contempt of such a pastor. "Let no one deceive himself; unless he be within the altar, he is deprived of the bread of God. If the prayers of one or two

persons have so much efficacy, how much more that of the bishop and of the whole church. He, therefore, that comes not to the same, is already lifted up ‘with pride;’ and has condemned himself: for it is written, *God is opposed to the proud*. Let us therefore study not to be opposed to the bishop, that we may be subject to God:” — “And in proportion as any one sees the bishop more silent, ought he to venerate him the more. For whomsoever the Master of the house has sent to administer for himself, should be received as him who sent him: the bishop, therefore, it is plain, is to be regarded as the Lord himself.”

In the epistle to the church of Philadelphia, are these expressions: “For there is one body of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one cup in the unity of his blood; one altar, as also one bishop, with the presbytery and the deacons, my fellow-servants,” &c. The holy father certainly cannot be understood to say this respecting an heretical bishop; for he praises them not only for their good order in God — or rather, Onesimus, their bishop, had praised it to him — but that “they lived after the truth, and no heresy dwelt among them, neither heard they any one more than Christ, who speaketh in truth.” The doctrine of the incarnation is beautifully stated: “There is one Physician, fleshly and also spiritual, born and unborn, in man, being God; in death, true life<sup>1</sup>; both from Mary and from God; first being capable of suffering, and then incapable. Adverting to the judgment of the last times, he has this expressive sentence: “We must either fear future wrath, or love present grace.” “The beginning of life is faith, the end love, and these two, being in one, (or ‘in oneness,’) are of God.”

Besides Ignatius and Polycarp, there were many still surviving, who had been converted by the ministry of the apostles, and who, on that account, were held in the highest respect by all the churches. The greater part of these were not attached to any particular church, but having distributed their substance to the poor, they travelled from place to place as Christian missionaries and evangelists, in imitation of the apostles, confirming the churches already planted, and introducing the knowledge of the Gospel into new countries, where they gathered churches; and ordained pastors for the government of them. The power of God was with them, as it had been with

<sup>1</sup> For this reading see Vossius.

their predecessors. They wrought miracles, and, in many parts of the world, great numbers of persons no sooner heard their tidings of salvation, than the divine influence was visible in their conviction and immediate reception of the truth. By the labours of these men, purity of doctrine and uniformity of discipline were kept up, generally, throughout the church, all the days of Trajan, and for some time after; and while persecution tried the older churches, and perfected many through sufferings, separating, no doubt, in many cases, the true from the false professors, God was extending the borders of his church, with the same power and demonstration of the Spirit, which had at first established it in Jerusalem and the regions round about, and wherever the apostles were sent forth.

Persecution raged during the first two years of the emperor Adrian, who had succeeded Trajan<sup>1</sup>. The latter had forbidden the magistrates to search for the Christians, but the heathen priests found means to stir up the people against them; and, when a concourse of persons were brought together, as at their public games or spectacles, the occasion was often seized to inflame the popular fury against the Christians, which proved fatal to many. It is also noted as a feature of the times, not only that great numbers of Christians were found who durst suffer death for their religion, but that an anxious desire and ambition to end their days as martyrs, seems to have possessed some of them in an unwarrantable degree. Ignatius himself discovered somewhat of this spirit; and it is said, that when accusers were wanting, numbers of Christians would accuse themselves, and rush in crowds to the tribunals. It is recorded of one magistrate in Asia, that after having caused a few of these to be executed, he addressed the remainder: "O wretches, if you wish to die, have ye not lakes and precipices?" That this was a holy zeal in many, it does not become us to question; but there is room to suspect, that unsound views of the glory and meritoriousness of the act, had begun to infect the minds of some; and in men of a certain spirit, the noble sacrifice that insured their crown would appear more desirable, than, in obscurity, to work out their salvation in the mortification of carnal appetites, in the labour of love, and in the patience of hope. Great mischief afterwards arose in the church from an overweening conceit of the glory of martyrdom. But after all, do not fanatics and the mistaken dupes of every false religion do the same? We must ever re-

<sup>1</sup> A. D. 117.



member what is written in the word of God : “ If I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.” So that it is only in connexion with other evidences of genuine religion, that even martyrdom is to be regarded as a decisive proof of faithfulness.

Quadratus, a disciple of the apostles, and Aristides, a Christian of Athens, addressed, at this time, apologies to the emperor, in behalf of the suffering Christians ; and Serenius, proconsul of Asia, perhaps moved at the sight of these sufferings, had written to him, “ that it appeared to him unreasonable that the Christians should be put to death, merely to gratify the clamours of the people, without trial, and without any crime proved against them.” Adrian answered this by a rescript to the successor of Serenius, Minucius Fundanus, in which he directs, “ If the people of the province appear publicly, and make open charges against the Christians, so as to give them an opportunity of answering for themselves, let them proceed in that manner only, and not by rude demands and mere clamours. For it is much more proper, if any person will accuse them, that *you* should take cognisance of these matters. If any then accuse, and shew that they actually break the laws, do you determine according to the nature of the crime. But, by Hercules ! if the charge be a mere calumny, do you estimate the enormity of such calumny, and punish it as it deserves.”

How far this rescript of Adrian checked the persecution, authors are not agreed. Some<sup>1</sup> suppose the intention was, that Christians, as such, should not be liable to punishment ; but others<sup>2</sup>, supported by the fact, that Christians, after this period, suffered death for no other imputed crime than that of being Christians, conclude that the laws which enjoined the worship of the heathen gods, were not intended to be repealed ; so that if the Christian was brought to this test by the magistrate, he suffered accordingly.

In this reign, the Christians found another cruel enemy in the Jewish impostor, Barchochebas, who had excited that unhappy people to rebellion : wherever his power extended, he subjected the Christians to the most cruel tortures. This insurrection ended in the more entire destruction of the Jews. Palestine was nearly depopulated, and Jerusalem, which had begun to revive again, was, by Adrian’s orders, overthrown and laid waste, and a new city, called Elia Capitolina, erected near its site, which the Jews were prohibited to enter under the severest penalties.

<sup>1</sup> Milner.

<sup>2</sup> Mosheim.

During this conflict, the church of Jerusalem seems to have been reduced to a low state; the survivors, laying aside their conformity to their national ceremonies, settled in the new city, under a bishop who was not of the circumcision<sup>1</sup>.

The Gnostic heresies also prevailed at the same time, to the great distress of the church; but they appear to have been opposed, with some success, by able defenders of the truth, who were yet found among the successors of the apostles.

Antoninus Pius succeeded Adrian<sup>2</sup>; he may be reckoned the most friendly of all these princes, to the persecuted Christians. The rescript of Adrian seems to have introduced a new method of persecution; the enemies of the church, driven to find out some plausible accusations against the Christians, charged them with all manner of crimes, especially with being atheists. The Christians being also considered, by the superstitious pagans, as the cause of every public calamity that happened, the latter burst through all restraints, on such occasions, to wreak their vengeance on those enemies of the gods. The complaints of the former to the emperor, produced an edict to the common council of Asia, much in their favour; it even threatened those who accused the Christians, with exemplary punishment. Thus, though the severe laws against them were not repealed, all prosecutions against them were for the present stopped.

But this protection lasted only a short time. Antoninus Pius was succeeded by Marcus Antoninus<sup>3</sup>, surnamed the Philosopher, who proved a most determined enemy to the faith of Christ. The public accusations were immediately resumed, and all who refused to renounce their religion were led to execution. The enemies of the Christians were even encouraged to prosecute, and the state of the church under this emperor was highly afflictive. He was of the Stoic sect, and having derived all his knowledge of the Christians from the reports of the philosophers with whom he was continually surrounded, he had conceived a most hateful prejudice against them. In a work of his, still extant, after he had painted to himself the tranquillity of a philosopher's death, he represents the Christian as dying "altogether irrationally, without any other consolation than what is supplied by a certain stubbornness and pertinacity of mind, for which no pretext is to be found either in common sense or reason. The philosopher encounters death with firmness and composure, unaccompanied with any tragical display. Not such is the conduct

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius.

<sup>2</sup> A. D. 137.

<sup>3</sup> A. D. 161.



of the Christian ; for he, regardless of what propriety would suggest, appears to take the deaths exhibited in tragedies for his model ; and when the fatal moment arrives, expatiates at length on his joy, his hope, his confidence, and his contempt of death." This is a most valuable testimony from the adversaries of the Gospel, and it proves that frequent accounts were current of the happy and triumphant deaths of the Christians. The pride of the Philosopher, indeed, deemed it unreasonable ; for, after all his affected composure in the prospect of the fatal hour, he was a stranger to the hope and joy that animated the despised Christian in his death, though he died by the hand of violence.

Under this emperor, the last of the apostolic fathers, Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, suffered martyrdom. Irenæus, who knew him, reports, that he had been instructed by the apostles, and had conversed with many who had seen Christ. The account of his martyrdom is given in a letter from the church of Smyrna to the church of Philomilium, and the churches of Pontus, from which I shall extract a short account.

A furious persecution had broken out in Smyrna, in which every species of torture that wicked ingenuity could invent, was practised upon its victims. The infuriated populace had already called out for the aged bishop, who was still in the city. He was, however, persuaded by his friends, to retire to a farm-house in the neighbourhood. His companions remarked that he was continually engaged in prayer for all the congregations throughout the world. Three days before his apprehension, he informed his companions of a vision, which had shewed him that he must glorify God by giving his body to be burned. When the men who were in search of him were approaching, his friends prevailed on him again to remove ; but the searchers traced him to his retreat, and though he might have escaped, he resigned himself, saying, " The will of the Lord be done." The sight of the fine old man, his venerable countenance, and his pleasant manner, seem to have much moved his pursuers. Similar feelings of pity and respect, perhaps, had induced some of the city magistrates to meet him, in order to try to persuade him to recant. They represented to him that there could be no great harm, in order to save his life, to say " Lord Cæsar," and to sacrifice. This, it appears, was the manner in which the image of the emperor was to be saluted, at the same time that incense was thrown on an altar standing before it. But, in a Christian's estimation, this trifling act was an act of idolatry. When

they could not prevail, being offended with what they deemed his unreasonable obstinacy, they rudely thrust him from their carriage.

It is said, that when he entered the theatre, a voice from heaven bid him be of good cheer. Many of the Christians heard it, though the tumult of the enraged multitude was exceedingly great at his appearance. The proconsul himself was moved to pity at the appearance of his great age ; and when he demanded—Whether he was that Polycarp—beckoned to him to deny it, and would fain have persuaded him to give some token of his repentance,—merely to swear by the fortune of Cæsar, and revile Christ. The answer of the venerable bishop is truly affecting : “ Fourscore and six years have I served him, and he hath done no injury to me : how can I revile my King, who hath saved me ! ” The proconsul still kept urging him, pretending, as Polycarp perceived, not to know who he was ; on which he told him, “ it was useless,” and openly avowed, “ I am a Christian ; and if you would wish to learn an account of Christianity, appoint a day and hear.” The proconsul said, “ Persuade the people.” Polycarp replied, “ To you, I deem it proper to offer an account ; for we are taught to pay such respect to rulers and authorities, as is becoming, and not injurious to ourselves ; but I hold not these in such esteem that I should apologize to them.” The proconsul began to threaten, first, with the wild beasts, and then with the fire ; but he was answered by the bishop : “ He could not turn by repentance from the better to the worse.” “ You threaten fire that burns for the space of an hour, and is soon extinguished, ignorant of the fire of the future judgment and of eternal punishment, reserved for the wicked.” The proconsul, though evidently much impressed with the appearance and conduct of his prisoner, had probably no discretionary power, and as Polycarp had confessed himself a Christian, his confession was ordered to be proclaimed by the officer of the court. The multitude exclaimed, “ This is the teacher of Asia,” “ the father of the Christians,” “ the destroyer of our gods, who has taught many not to sacrifice, and not to worship the gods ! ” They insisted that a lion should be turned out upon him. When they were informed that the time for bringing forth the beasts was expired, they demanded that he should be burnt alive ; and in a moment the multitude were busied in collecting the materials of the fire from all the shops and stalls. The wretched Jews, as was usual on such occasions, were observed to be more active than the heathen.

His pile was soon prepared, and the martyr began to undress himself even to his shoes; a thing unusual for him, as it struck the affectionate observation of his friends, for the faithful had long been ambitious of performing these little offices about the person of their beloved pastor. When all was ready, and the executioners were about to fix him with chains and nails to the stake, he said, "Let me be as I am; He who gives me power to abide the fire, will enable me to remain steadfast without the precaution of your nails." They then merely tied his hands behind him. Looking up to heaven, he was heard to pray; "Lord God Almighty, the Father of thy beloved and blessed Son Jesus Christ, through whom we have come to the knowledge of thee, God of angels, and of powers, and of all the creation, and of all the generation of the just who live before thee, I thank thee that thou hast deemed me meet for this day and this hour; that I should receive a portion in the number of thy martyrs, in the cup of thine Anointed, for the resurrection of eternal life, both in soul and body, in the incorruption of the Holy Ghost;—among whom may I be received before thee to-day in a rich and acceptable sacrifice, as thou hast prepared, and hast fore-shewn, and hast fulfilled, true and faithful God! Wherefore, for all things I praise thee, I bless thee, I glorify thee, with the eternal and heavenly Jesus Christ<sup>1</sup>, thy beloved Son; to whom with thee and the Holy Ghost, be glory now and for ever. *Amen.*"

His affectionate followers thought they saw something miraculous in the arching of the flames over him, "encompassing him like the sail of a ship." What the fire seemed to them unwilling to accomplish, the executioner effected with a spear. When his side was pierced, so great a quantity of blood issued from the wound, that the fire was quenched, "which," say they, "astonished the multitude, that there should be such a difference between the unbelievers and the elect, of which he was one," &c. The Christians were desirous of possessing his remains, but their enemies were as anxious to prevent it, declaring to the magistrates their apprehension, that, leaving the Crucified, they would begin to worship him;—"ignorant," they say, "that we can never forsake Christ, who suffered for the salvation of all the world of them that are saved<sup>2</sup>, and worship any other Him, indeed, being the Son of God, we

<sup>1</sup> Or "Eternal High Priest," according to some copies.

<sup>2</sup> Τὸν ὕμνον τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς κοίτης καὶ τοῦ ἐκζουμένου αὐτοῦ παύσαι.

worship; but the martyrs, as the disciples and imitators of the Lord, we deservingly love, because of their eminent attachment to their King and Teacher: of whom may we be the associates and fellow-disciples." The body was ordered to be consumed; but they represent themselves as gathering up his bones, as a treasure more precious than pearls or gold, and burying them in a proper place, at which they express their hope that they shall assemble with joy and gladness, to celebrate the birth-day of the martyr;—little thinking that this affectionate token of remembrance might, in after ages, lead to that very idolatry which they so much abhorred. Twelve other persons, from Philadelphia, suffered at the same time with Polycarp, and many others during the same persecution.

In the same year<sup>1</sup>, according to some writers<sup>2</sup>, Justin, another celebrated father of the Christian church, suffered. His martyrdom is placed a few years earlier by Mr. Milner; but however the point of chronology may be settled, I have thought it best, in the first place, to give an account of the death of Polycarp. With him the series of the apostolical fathers closes; and though Justin stands eminent among the defenders of the Christian cause, he appears at least as the harbinger of a new school, in which the simplicity of the Gospel begins to be "spoiled by philosophy and doctrines of men."

Justin was born in Palestine, and received the learned education of the times. He finished his studies at Alexandria, which was then beginning to be famous as a new school of philosophy. Here he received instructions from teachers of the different pagan sects, and finally attached himself to the followers of Plato. As the contemplating philosopher was one day walking by the sea side, he was struck with the appearance of a venerable old man, with whom he soon entered into conversation. The stranger checked his admiration of the philosophers of the heathen world; and having pointed out the Hebrew prophets as much more ancient, he unfolded to him some of the principles of the Christian religion. His advice was: "Above all things, pray that the gates of light may be opened to you, for they are not discernible to any man, unless God and his Christ enable him to understand." Justin saw the stranger no more; but he remarks, "a fire was kindled in my soul, and feelings of strong affection towards the prophets and the friends of Christ:

<sup>1</sup> A. D. 169.

<sup>2</sup> So Mosheim De Rebus, &c.

in the end, I found the divine Scriptures to be the only sure philosophy." He says, " he found Christianity to have a formidable majesty, terrifying to those who are in the way of transgression ; but a sweetness, peace, and serenity, to those who are conversant with it." The example also of the Christians suffering death so calmly for their faith, made no small impression upon him. After his conversion, we find him at Rome, confuting heretics, disputing with the heathen philosophers, and presenting apologies to the emperors on behalf of the Christians, which are still extant. From these it plainly appears what obloquy was attached to the name of Christian, and how the world, always unfair and injurious in its hatred, was fond of aspersing the whole body with the faults of some who bore the name, and was eager to receive any calumnies against them. In another work he notices these calumnies : " Their eating men"—" their extinguishing the lights"—and " their promiscuous sensuality." But he knew them better, and could refer to " many instances" where persons had been impressed in favour of the Gospel, by observing the sobriety and temperance of their Christian neighbours—the unparalleled meekness of their Christian fellow-travellers under cruel treatment—or the uncommon integrity and equity of those with whom they transacted business.

Justin does not appear to have entered into the Christian ministry, but continued to wear the philosopher's dress. In that ominous character, however, he taught and explained Christianity to all who came to him. " If I mistake not," Mr. Milner remarks, " he always preserved a very strong tincture of the spirit of philosophy, though not in such a manner as to prevent his sincere attachment to the Gospel." He embraced the common faith of the Christians of that age, respecting the Trinity, and the mystery of Christ. In his first Apology to the emperor, when combating the charge of atheism brought against the Christians, he says, " They worship not the gods commonly so called, but they worship and adore the true God, and his Son, and the prophetic Spirit, honouring them in word and in truth." But, too fond of Plato and his philosophy, he seems to have forgotten that " the world by wisdom knew not God ;" and when he speaks of a particle of the Divine Word, which he calls the Son of God, as innate in every man, and seems to put his " self-determining power" in the place of that work of the Spirit which quickens the soul dead in trespasses and sins, he appears as the forerunner of the erroneous teachers of subsequent ages.

and excites an apprehension, whether he understood clearly the doctrines of regeneration and of divine illumination, which he, nevertheless, acknowledged and taught.

The enmity of the philosophers at length brought the fatal accusation home to Justin; and whatever obscurity there might have been in some of his views of Christian truth, he was found faithful unto death. The prefect who condemned him, addressed him personally, after having examined some others in the same accusation, "Hear thou, who hast the character of an orator, and imaginest thyself to be in possession of the truth; if I scourge thee from head to foot, thinkest thou that thou shalt go to heaven?" The Christian philosopher answered: "Although I suffer what you threaten, yet I expect to enjoy the portion of all true Christians; as I know that the Divine grace and favour is laid up for all such, and shall be while the world endureth." "Do you think that you shall go to heaven, and receive a reward?" "I not only think so, but I know it, and have a certainty of it which excludes all doubt." They were carried back to prison, whipped, and beheaded.

In this reign, indeed, persecution raged in every city throughout the world; and we may conjecture, says the ancient historian, what multitudes must have perished, by what happened in one nation. That nation was modern France, then called Gaul. The two most frequented cities at that time, were Vienne and Lyons, both situated on the river Rhone. Eusebius has preserved a letter from the churches in these cities, addressed to the churches of Asia and Phrygia, giving an account of their martyrs. The letter is too long for insertion in this short history, but it is written in the language of primitive and scriptural simplicity. They see the malice of Satan raging in their adversaries, and the grace of God withstanding him, in the constancy of the weak sufferers, and in the holy boldness with which many come forward to confess their Master's name. "They hastened unto Christ, declaring, as the truth is, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed in us." Every variety of instruments of torture is described—enough to make us blush with shame for human nature. But these primitive Christians do not only eulogise the courage of their martyrs; they also mention their having "the fulness of love towards God and man," and speak of their "possession of the Spirit, which is the Comforter, as being the source of that love within them."

Some few fell "through weakness of the flesh;" but numbers



of both churches were found valiant in the cause of truth. It is mentioned as a part of their affliction, that their heathen servants having been seized by the order of the governor, were induced, by the fear of torture, to declare the calumnies brought against them to be true — “ their eating children, committing incest, &c., so that all, even former friends, were incensed against them.” The time was come, they said, “ which the Lord foretold,” “ when whosoever killeth you shall think that he doeth God service.” Sanctus of Vienne, the deacon, and Maturus, a late convert, and Attalus, who, they said, had ever been a pillar and support of our church, and Blandina, a weak and delicate woman, for whom all trembled, were particularly tried by the utmost fury of the tormentors. The latter, exposed to the most exquisite tortures from morning to night, only exclaimed, “ I am a Christian ! no evil is committed amongst us !” It would be painful even to read, perhaps hurtful to the imagination of some to think of, what these holy martyrs endured.

Concerning one woman, who had been terrified to deny Christ, they tell us that “ Satan thinking he had subdued her,” and “ that she, a weak and timorous creature, might be brought to accuse us, caused her to be led to the torture she feared :” “ but in her torture she recovered herself, and awoke as out of a deep sleep, being admonished, by a temporary punishment, of the danger of eternal fire in hell :” she resumed her Christian profession, and died with the martyrs. Pothinus, bishop of Lyons, though upwards of ninety years of age, was treated with such insults and blows, that he died in consequence. When it was known, by a reference to the emperor, that the relapsed, who had till then been kept in prison, might be released, they, to the surprise of the Gentiles, made confession. “ A small number,” they say, “ still remained in apostasy ; but they were those that possessed not the least spark of faith, had not the least acquaintance with the riches of Christ in their souls, and had no fear of God before their eyes ; whose life had brought reproach upon Christianity, and had evidenced them to be the children of perdition ; but all the rest were added to the church.”

The dead bodies of these saints, those at least which the wild beasts and the fires had left, were not suffered to be buried, but lay exposed for several days to the sight of their enemies ; some insulting and deriding, and praising their gods as for a victory ; others, with upbraiding pity, exclaiming, “ Where is your God ?” “ What profit do you derive from your religion, which ye valued above life itself ?” The bodies were afterwards

burnt, and the ashes scattered on the surface of the Rhone, that no particle of them might remain on earth. Their motive for this act, was their knowledge that the belief of a resurrection of the body, was part of that hope which sustained the Christians in their sufferings<sup>1</sup>.

This persecution lasted through the whole reign of Antoninus, or Aurelius, as he is sometimes called. We have now seen the situation of the church of God during the fourscore years that Trajan and his successors governed the Roman world with so much vigour and splendour, while all but the Christians enjoyed peace and prosperity. But the hour of retribution was at hand; the short-lived prosperity of the conquering empire, and of the world which it had won, was soon to give place to scenes of blood and carnage, which plainly mark the avenging hand of God on the persecutors and their children.

## SECT. II.

Commodus, a most cruel and ferocious tyrant, succeeded his father Antoninus<sup>2</sup>. The era of conquest was exchanged for an era of blood; the peaceful government of Trajan and the Antonines gave place to oppression and civil war; and that licentiousness of the soldiery now began to manifest itself, which, however suppressed for a time, was never afterwards entirely subdued till it had laid prostrate the great city that reigned over the kings of the earth. Mr. Gibbon, from this epocha, dates the decline of the Roman empire; and speaks of the accession of Commodus, as productive of “a revolution to this day felt among the nations of the earth<sup>3</sup>.”

Commodus, after a cruel reign of twelve years, during which he had with peculiar anxiety sought out for destruction those who were connected, how remotely soever, with the family of the Antonines, was killed by his own domestics<sup>4</sup>. His successor Pertinax reigned only eighty-six days, and was murdered by the soldiers of the Prætorian bands, who afterwards sold the empire to Julian. This act was disallowed by the armies in Britain, Syria, and Pannonia; their revolt “was fatal to Julian, and fatal, at the

<sup>1</sup> See the whole account in Mr. Milner and Eusebius.

<sup>2</sup> A. D. 180.

<sup>3</sup> The events, I doubt not, predicted in the opening of the Second Seal, Rev. vi. 3, 4.

<sup>4</sup> A. D. 192.



same time, to the public peace ; for, as the generals of the respective armies, whose forces were exactly balanced, were still more anxious to succeed than to revenge Pertinax, a civil war ensued : two bloody battles at length decided the fate of the competitors, in one of which 150,000 Romans were engaged." This period of tyranny and civil discord, brings, us within a few years of the close of the century. It proved, through the wonderful providence of God, a time of rest and outward prosperity to the church. Commodus, so cruel in his civil government, arrested the persecution of the Christians throughout the empire ; not from any principle of justice or of mercy, but to please a favourite mistress, who, from some cause now unknown, was, on this occasion, their friend. By such instruments is the counsel of God fulfilled.

The language used by the historian, to describe the success and extension of the Gospel, is the strongest possible ; he records, in particular, that many of the nobles of Rome, with their families, embraced the faith. The laws against the profession of Christianity were not, however, absolutely repealed ; if convicted of the crime, the accused were still to suffer ; but the accusers were, at the same time, subjected to capital punishment by an ordinance of the emperor. This was their strange but effectual security<sup>1</sup>.

The catalogue of the Roman bishops, from the age of the apostles, is found in Irenæus, a writer who flourished at this time ; but of a very few, since Clemens, nothing more than the name has been preserved. His successor was Evaristus ; after him followed Alexander ; then the sixth bishop from the apostles, Sixtus ; next, Telesphorus, " who suffered most gloriously as a martyr ;" then followed Hyginus, Pius, Anicetus, Soter. There is notice, in Eusebius, of a letter from Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, to this Soter, recommending the Roman Christians to continue a charitable custom, which from their first plantation they had always practised, of sending relief to various churches throughout the world, and of assisting more particularly those who were condemned to the mines ; " a strong proof," Mr. Milner observes, " that the Roman church continued opulent and numerous, and also that they still partook much of the spirit of Christ."

We perceive a very natural cause for the early importance of the church of Rome in the Christian world. Jerusalem

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius, v. xix.

had indeed the priority of all the churches; but from circumstances which we have already noticed, it was now a society of no great eminence. Antioch was certainly the mother church of all the Gentiles; the central point, for some years, from which the apostles went forth, and to which they returned. But the superior importance of the capital of the civilised world, perhaps the superior success of the Gospel among its numerous population, the superior wealth and influence of its professors, and more especially the circumstance that St. Paul,—and there is no reasonable doubt, St. Peter also,—had made it their residence in their latter days, would, of course, procure a pre-eminence for that church in the estimation of all who professed the Christian name. We may add that, in all probability, their early bishops and presbyters were men of the highest character, whose advice would naturally be sought. This circumstance was, indeed, for some time, more than balanced by the protracted life of the apostle John in the East, and of his disciples, Ignatius and Polycarp; but after their decease, the usual reference in Christian affairs, especially in the West, would be to the heads of the Roman church.

All churches, under their respective bishops, were certainly, at this time, independent; the visitorial guardianship of the apostles, and of their immediate successors, who, in their continual circuits, had planted and watered them, was now no more. But still the desire of preserving the unity of the faith, and of the Christian profession, especially as heresies began to abound, and various disputes arose, would often render a reference to the judgment and practice of the more eminent and longer established churches, both useful and necessary. We find, in fact, that this was the usual practice; and that I am not too early in claiming this sort of pre-eminence for Rome, is plain from the expressions of Irenæus. We have, indeed, only a translation extant of this part of his work; but, however imperfectly it may represent the original, we cannot altogether mistake the writer's views. He is mentioning Rome, among the other churches which had apostles for their founders: "For to this church, on account of *its* more powerful principality"—which may mean only a more extensive sway with respect to its more numerous members—"it is necessary that the whole church should have recourse"—convenire—"that is, those who are faithful, from all parts"—"*to that church*"—"in which has always, by them who are from all parts, been preserved that tradition which is from the apostles."

We may be thankful, indeed, from what has since happened, that our holy faith was not left to be preserved by tradition in Rome, or in any other of the apostolic churches. The Bible, and the Bible alone, after the Spirit of prophecy was withdrawn, could preserve it from corruption and adulteration. But, at this early period, the constant and uniform tradition, in all these churches, was an argument of great importance against recent heretics, as Irenæus uses it, in addition to the written word; and especially as many of these false teachers did not receive all the Scriptures. It was certainly an argument of great weight, to be able to urge against such teachers as Valentinus and Marcion, leaders of the Gnostic heresies that now much troubled the church, what Clemens, who had been a contemporary of the apostles, had been known to teach; and more recently, Polycarp, the disciple of St. John, who, he tells us, had come to Rome, under Anicetus, and had actually converted many of these heretics to the church, declaring “that that was the one and only truth delivered from the apostles, which had been committed to the church.” Anicetus was only the second bishop in succession before Eleutherius, who, in Irenæus’s time, presided at Rome; so that he was quite competent to testify that, through this succession of bishops, “the tradition of the apostles, and the preaching of the truth, has come even to us;” and to assert against those who set up a tradition of their own against the written word, “that this was a most full demonstration that it is one and the same life-giving faith, which is even to this present time preserved and handed down in truth, in the church, from the apostles.”

Not only does he refer to the tradition of the apostolic churches, as being against the heretics, but he observes, “there are many nations of those barbarians who believe in Christ, without pen and paper, having salvation written by the Spirit in their hearts, and diligently preserving the ancient tradition, believing in one God, the Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things that are therein, by Jesus Christ, the Son of God; who, for his most eminent love towards his own workmanship, sustained that generation which was from the Virgin; he, by himself, having united man to God, and suffered under Pontius Pilate, and risen, and being received into brightness, will come again with glory, the Saviour of them who are saved, and the Judge of them that are judged; and sending into eternal fire the corrupters of the truth, and the despisers of his Father and of his coming.” “This faith those who believe without letters, with

regard to our language, are barbarians ; but with respect to their sentiment and behaviour, most wise, because of ‘ their faith ;’ and please God, walking in righteousness, and purity, and wisdom. To these, if any one should preach in their own tongue these inventions of the heretics, they would immediately stop their ears, and flee far away ; not bearing to hear such blasphemous discourse.”

This is a beautiful testimony that the church was still “ the ground and pillar of the truth,” and that all Christians were unanimous against the errors of the Gnostics, of what class soever they might be, concerning the Father and the Son, and the mystery of godliness. These heretics, it seems, were becoming at this period very insidious. “ In public (says Irenæus) they use alluring discourses, because of the common Christians,—as they call those who wear the Christian name in general ;—and to entice them to come often, they pretend to preach like us,” &c.

The testimony of the same writer is conclusive, that miraculous gifts were not altogether withdrawn from the churches at this era. It appears also that the church was harassed by false prophets, both men and women ; they seem to have been possessed with a fanatical spirit ; and, unlike the true prophets, they fell in trances, gave way to every extravagancy, and raved in perfect frenzy of mind<sup>1</sup>. Of this class was Montanus, whose followers afterwards made a lasting division from the church.

In the tenth year of Commodus, Eleutherius, bishop of Rome, was succeeded by Victor. This bishop appears to have felt something of the genius of the future popes. There was a diversity between the churches of the East and of the West, about the time of keeping Easter : the former followed the mode of observing the passover, by the age of the moon ; the latter always celebrated the Lord’s resurrection, on the Sunday, according to the present practice. This dispute had arisen as early as the time of Polycarp and Anicetus ; but the apostolic fathers were of opinion, that the respective churches might follow their own practice. Victor, however, now began to assume authority, and to pronounce excommunicated, or cut off from the unity of the church, all the churches and congregations that observed not the western rule. But the church was not yet ripe for such arrogancy and usurpation. The other bishops were not pleased with this proceeding of Victor, but severely reproved him, and

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius, and the authors quoted by him.

advised him to seek after the things that made for peace and brotherly love. Among others, Irenæus wrote to him on this subject, and urged the example of his predecessor Anicetus, and of Polycarp. "They differed," he observes, "on this and other trifling matters, but soon agreed that each ought to follow the example of his predecessors. They communicated one with another; and in the church Anicetus granted the eucharist unto Polycarp<sup>1</sup>, out of the reverence which he owed unto him;" — "and all that retained contrary observations held fast the bond of love and unity throughout the universal church." Irenæus has this very striking observation: "This *variety* of fasting commends the *unity* of faith."

But neither the impression made about this time by the Gnostic heresies, nor the raving of fanatics, nor this single stretch of ecclesiastical power in the bishop of the most eminent church in the empire, did so much mischief, or does so mark the decline of the true spirit of Christianity, as the inroad which about this time began to be made on the simplicity of the faith by philosophy, "after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."

Towards the end of this century there arose, among the heathen, the sect of new Platonics, or Eclectics, which spread with amazing rapidity throughout the Roman world, and swallowed up almost all the other sects of the pagan philosophy. Comprehensive and latitudinarian in its principles, it refused not to admire some things delivered by Moses and the prophets, and which were to be found in the precepts of the Christian sect; and, in return, they received no little homage from some of the teachers of the church. Justin Martyr, the converted philosopher, and, in some measure, Irenæus, who had read his writings, had prepared the way for this; and this philosophy was now openly embraced by some Christian teachers of Alexandria, who were ambitious of the title of philosophers. Among these were Athenagoras, Pantænus, and Clemens Alexandrinus. The system afterwards underwent some changes by Ammonius, and was very extensively embraced in the church, where it much adulterated the truth; and though it seemed to give the cause of Christ able defenders, and is reckoned as one cause of the progress of Christianity, yet, in fact, it substituted in the place of the pure and sublime simplicity of the Gospel, an unseemly mixture of heathen philosophy, and the doctrines of

<sup>1</sup> Lib. v. xxvi. 'The administration.'

revelation, as the word of prophecy had predicted. The basis of the system of this paganised Christianity, was the same as that of the older Gnostics, the ancient philosophy of the East, which St. Paul stigmatises as “the mystery of iniquity already working,” foreseeing in it the latent causes of the future apostasy which was to oppress the church. But these philosophisers brought also to their aid, the more refined scheme of the Grecians. They considered Plato as the best interpreter, among the heathens, of this ancient wisdom, which they maintained to be the common source of truth, from which all the various sects and opinions of the world, variously corrupted, were derived. Jesus Christ, they taught, came to restore this ancient theology. Thus they shaped it in a Christian mould. The government of the world by demons, to whom a kind of inferior worship was due, was one of their leading tenets. A way was thus made for what the Scripture denominates “the worshipping of angels;” for the kind of being which was termed a demon, in the language of Plato and the ancient mythologists, the Hebrews designated by the term “angel;” and it is singular that this system, which is supposed, in very ancient times, to have been diffused from Egypt over the nations of Europe, should be refined in the same spot, and sent forth again to turn away the same people from the truth, and at length to restore the empire of idolatry. The moral discipline of the Eclectics carried an aspect of high sanctity and uncommon austerity. They were to raise the soul, whose origin was celestial and divine, by contemplation, above all terrestrial things. The sluggish body, which restrains the immortal spirit, they were to extenuate by hunger, thirst, and other mortifications:—the very “rudiments of the world,” marked by the apostle as destructive of true religion; “which things have indeed a *show* of wisdom in will-worship and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh<sup>1</sup>!”

Surely, in all this, we see the yet unformed materials of the future apostasy being hewn from the quarry by the seducing spirit of the power of darkness! The fanatical spirit and lying wonders of the Montanists—joined with this new philosophy, and the worshipping of angel or demon protectors, substituting mysticism and bodily austerities for true holiness, and for the mortifying of carnal affections—and directed by such a spirit in church rulers, as shewed itself in bishop Victor, in the Easter

<sup>1</sup> Col. ii. Mosheim comp. Milner.



controversy, might have been expected soon to erect the temple of the papacy. But the time was not yet. The true spirit of prophecy was still with the church; better principles long withstood the inroads of the new philosophy; the tyranny of the Roman bishop was unsupported, and Victor himself died a faithful martyr for the truth. The holy city was not yet given to be trodden under foot by the Gentiles.

What kind of people the Christians were in this age of the apostolic fathers, and of their surviving contemporaries, and of what kind were the doctrines taught in their churches, before they were spoiled by philosophy, we may further learn even from the malicious representations of their enemies. Lucian, who wrote in the reign of Trajan, says of the Christians: "These poor creatures are firmly persuaded they shall one day enjoy immortal life; therefore they despise death with wonderful courage, and offer themselves voluntarily to punishment. Their first lawgiver has put it into their heads that they are all brethren. Since they separated from us, they persevere in rejecting the gods of the Grecians, and worshipping that deceiver who was crucified; they regulate their manners and customs by his laws; they despise, therefore, all earthly possessions, and enjoy them in common. Therefore, if any magician or juggler, any cunning fellow who knows how to make his advantage of opportunity, happens to get into their society, he immediately grows rich; because it is easy for a man of this sort to abuse the simplicity of these silly people<sup>1</sup>."

The philosopher Celsus, who wrote against the Christians, in the latter part of this century, affords an undeniable inference as to the doctrines as yet generally taught in the Christian church. "You say that God was sent to sinners; but why not to those who were free from sin? What harm is it not to have sinned?" "You encourage sinners, because you are not able to persuade any really good men; therefore you open the doors to the most wicked and abandoned." "Some of them say, do not examine, but believe, and thy faith shall save thee." "These are our institutions." Speaking sarcastically of the Christians—"Let not any man of learning come here, nor any wise man, nor any man of prudence; for these things are reckoned evil by us. But whosoever is unlearned, ignorant, and silly, let him come without fear." "Thus

<sup>1</sup> Milner.

they own that they can gain only the foolish, the vulgar, the stupid, slaves, women, and children." "All wise men are excluded from the doctrine of their faith; they call in only fools and men of a servile spirit."

Celsus frequently upbraids Christians for reckoning Him "who had a mortal body to be God, and looking on themselves to be pious on that account." "The preachers of their divine word only attempt to persuade fools, mean and senseless persons, slaves, women, and children." — "What harm can there be in being learned, well informed, and both in being and in appearing a man of knowledge? What obstacle can this be to the knowledge of God? Must it not be an advantage?" — "We see these itinerants shewing readily their tricks to the vulgar, but not approaching the assemblies of wise men, nor daring there to shew themselves; but wherever they see boys, a crowd of slaves and ignorant men, there they thrust in themselves, and shew off their doctrine." — "You may see weavers, and tailors, and fullers, illiterate and rustic men, in their houses; but not daring to utter a word before persons of age, experience, and respectability; but when they get hold of boys privately, and silly women, they recount wonderful things, — that they must not mind their fathers or their tutors, but obey them, as their fathers and their guardians are quite ignorant and in the dark; but themselves alone have the true wisdom. And if children obey them, they pronounce them happy, and direct them to leave their fathers and tutors, and to go with the women and their playfellows into the chambers of the females, or into a tailor's or a fuller's shop, that they may learn perfection." — "In other mysteries the crier uses to say: Whoever has clean hands and a good conscience, and a good life, let him come in. But let us hear what they proclaim: Whoever is a sinner, a fool, an infant, a lost wretch, the kingdom of God will receive him." — "An unjust man, if he humble himself for his crimes, God will receive him; but a just man, who has proceeded in a course of virtue from the beginning, if he look up to him, *he* will not be received." Celsus compares a Christian doctor to a quack, who promises to heal the sick, on condition that they keep from intelligent practitioners, — lest his ignorance be detected.

Porphyry, a writer of a similar description, who followed not long after, asks, "If Christ be the way of salvation, the truth and the life, and those only that believe in him shall be saved, what became of the men who lived before his coming?" From



all this, it plainly appears what sort of doctrines were still preached, for only one system is capable of being thus mistaken and reviled. Still we see that the poor had the Gospel preached unto them ; still it is apparent, in general, that God hid those things from the wise and prudent, which he revealed unto babes ; still we see the Christian calling to be what it was in the apostles' days, " that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise ; and God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound things which are mighty ; and base things of the world, and things that are despised ; yea, and things that are not, to bring to nought things that are,"<sup>1</sup> &c.

The last-mentioned author, in a story which he relates respecting one who consulted the oracle of Apollo, " how to make his wife relinquish Christianity, shews the opinion which was held respecting the constancy of these pitied Christians. The answer was : " It is easier, perhaps, to write on water, or to fly in the air, than to reclaim her. Leave her to her folly — to hymn, in a faint mournful voice, the dead God, who publicly suffered death from judges of singular wisdom<sup>2</sup>."

Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, who died about the year 180, gives the following account of the doctrine of the Trinity : he is reported to have been the first who made use of that term. " The Word of God is his Son ; not as the poets and fabulous authors say, that gods have sons, begotten after the manner of men, but as Truth itself gives an account of the Word, which always existed in God : for before any thing was made he was his counsellor, and he was his thought." — " But when God was pleased to bring to pass all that was determined, he begat his Word External, the first-born of all creatures." — " Thus Theophilus acknowledges him to be the Word, co-eternal with the Father : but he calls that *generation*, or, according to the style of the ancient divines, *progression*, by which he was externally manifested, when the Father produced all things by him. He adds that God the Word, born of God, was sent by the Father when it pleased him. He calls the three days which preceded the creation of the stars, types of the *Trinity* of the Godhead — God, his Word, and his Wisdom, meaning by Wisdom the Holy Ghost, who is the giver of it<sup>3</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. i. 26, &c.    <sup>2</sup> Milner.    <sup>3</sup> Fleury, b. iv. 20. compare Horsley's Tracts.

## CHAPTER THE THIRD.

THE HISTORY OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH TILL THE CLOSE OF THE THIRD CENTURY. THE AGE OF ORIGEN, CYPRIAN, &c.

## SECT. I.

IN proceeding to the history of the church in the third century, I shall first notice the situation of affairs in the civil government of the empire. The successful general in the civil wars into which the cruel tyranny of Commodus had plunged the Roman world, was Severus, who seized upon the government, and under the pretence of the most strict and rigid justice, perhaps in some measure necessary in the disordered and dissolute state of the times, indulged his own severe and cruel disposition ; but he firmly established the imperial authority, and introduced a new era in civil history<sup>1</sup>.

“ Salutory laws,” Mr. Gibbon remarks, “ executed with inflexible firmness, soon corrected most of the abuses with which, since the accession of Commodus, every part of the government had been infected. In the administration of justice the judgments of the emperor were characterised by attention, discernment, and impartiality ; and whenever he deviated from the strict line of equity, it was generally in favour of the poor and distressed ; not so much, indeed, from any sense of humanity, but from the natural propensity of a despot to humble the pride of greatness, and to sink all his subjects to the same common level of absolute dependence.” “ He considered the Roman empire as his property, and had no sooner secured the possession, than he bestowed his care on the cultivation and improvement of so valuable an acquisition.”

Severus died at York, in the eighteenth year of his reign<sup>2</sup>. A stormy interval of a few years succeeded, amidst the struggles of his sons, Geta and Caracalla, and afterwards between Macrinus and Heliogabalus ; but the government at length settled under the administration of Alexander Severus<sup>3</sup>, who, though less cruel, restored both the name and the times of the first

<sup>1</sup> The era foretold in the Third Seal, Rev. vi. 5, 6.

<sup>2</sup> A. D. 211.

<sup>3</sup> A. D. 222.

Severus, and maintained the peace of the empire for thirteen years<sup>1</sup>; after which, a most extraordinary scene of distress and calamity followed, which brought the Roman empire to the very brink of ruin.

During this more peaceful part of the century, the church suffered severely from persecution. The rigid justice of the first Severus, doomed it to extirpation: weighed in the balance of his equity, the Christians were estimated to be “an infamous generation; a people that designed nothing but treason against the state.” Early in his reign, Victor, bishop of Rome, was martyred, and also Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, his reprover in the cause of Christian charity. Victor was succeeded by Zephyrinus, who held the see during eighteen years, when Calixtus followed, and having sat five years, left the church to Urbanus, who governed eight years, and was succeeded by Pontianus. In the tenth year of Severus<sup>2</sup>, the persecution is marked as general and very severe, especially in Alexandria, which, observes the historian, was “the theatre of God” for the champions out of Egypt and Thebes<sup>3</sup>.

How little the Christians of those days deserved this treatment from the justice of Severus, nothing can better shew, than what is found in the Apology of Tertullian, a Christian of Africa the first who has left any thing written in the Latin language. “We constantly pray for all emperors, that they may have a long life, a secure empire, a safe palace, strong armies, a faithful senate, a well-moralised people, a quiet state of the world.” “Thus, then, let the claws of wild beasts tear us, or their feet trample us, while our hands are stretched out to God: let crosses suspend us, let fires consume us, let swords pierce our Breasts;” — “a praying Christian is in a frame for enduring any thing. How is this — ye generous rulers! Will ye kill the good subject, who supplicates God for the emperor? Were we disposed to return evil for evil, it were easy for us to revenge the injuries which we sustain. — But God forbid that his people should vindicate themselves by human fire; or be reluctant to endure that by which their sincerity is evinced. Were we disposed to act the part, I will not say of secret assassins, but of open enemies, should we want forces and numbers? Are there not multitudes of us in every part of the world? It is true, we are but of yes-

<sup>1</sup> A. D. 235.

<sup>2</sup> A. D. 202.

<sup>3</sup> Euseb. vi. 1. So greatly did this persecution distress the universal church, that a writer on prophecy, at this period, declared it as his firm persuasion, that the time of Antichrist was at hand. EUSEB. vi. 6.

terday, and yet we have filled all your towns, cities, islands, castles, boroughs, councils, camps, courts, palaces, senate, forum : — We leave you only your temples. — For what war should we not be ready and well prepared, even though unequal in numbers — we, who die with so much pleasure — were it not that our religion requires us rather to suffer death than to inflict it ? If we were to make a general secession from your dominions, you would be astonished at your solitude. We are dead to all ideas of worldly honour and dignity : nothing is more foreign to us than political concerns. The whole world is our republic. — We are a body united in one bond of religion, discipline, and hope. We meet in our assemblies for prayer. We are compelled to have recourse to the divine oracles for caution and recollection, on all occasions. We nourish our faith by the word of God ; we erect our hope, we fix our confidence, we strengthen our discipline, by repeatedly inculcating precepts, exhortations, corrections, and by excommunication, when it is needful. This last, as being in the sight of God, is of great weight ; and is a serious warning of future judgment, if any one behave in so scandalous a manner as to be debarred from the holy communion. Those who preside amongst us are elderly persons, not distinguished for opulence, but worthiness of character. Every one pays something into the public chest once a month, or when he pleases, and according to his ability and inclination ; for there is no compulsion. These gifts are, as it were, the deposits of piety. Hence we relieve and bury the needy, support orphans and decrepit persons, those who have suffered shipwreck, and those who, for the word of God, are condemned to the mines or to imprisonment. This very charity of ours has caused us to be noticed by some ; — ‘ See,’ say they, “ how these Christians love one another ! ” He takes notice of the extreme readiness with which the Christians paid the taxes to the existing government, in opposition to the spirit of fraud and deceit, with which so many acted in these matters<sup>1</sup>.

This picture of the primitive Christians is highly interesting, yet some allowance must probably be made for the hyperbolical style of the orator, respecting their numbers ; but it is a sufficient testimony that religion had been long since propagated in Africa, though this is the first intimation we have of its existence in this part of the empire. The prostration of penitents, and the frequent signing of themselves with the sign of the cross, are mentioned among their traditional customs : something of the former

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Milner.

kind, indeed, seems to be alluded to in the practice of the Roman church<sup>1</sup>.

After the death of the first Severus, the persecution ceased to rage. Alexander is reported to have been a general encourager of all religions ; he professed to imitate the example of the Jews and Christians, at their ordination of priests, in publishing the names of those whom he would appoint to be magistrates, that the people, if they had any crime to accuse them of, might come forward, and make it known.

In the Christian writers of these times, whose works have come down to us, we have to lament a most sad declension in the knowledge of the truth. These were, however, of the eclectic school of Alexandria, Clemens Alexandrinus and Origen. We are not to judge, doubtless, of all the teachers of the Gospel, by this school ; we shall have to mention an author who appeared about the middle of the century, who was less contaminated : but the admiration in which these philosophical writers soon began to be held in the church, plainly marks the gradual decay of simple truth. The opinions of both these writers may be easily known, from the sketch of the doctrines of their sect already given. Defective in their views of the doctrine of original sin, all the teachers of this school must, of necessity, be unsound ; both when they treat of the doctrine of repentance, which discovers and describes its symptoms, and when they would teach the doctrine of faith, which makes known the remedy, and how to apply the healing medicine.

Origen<sup>2</sup> was the disciple of Clemens, and in fame he much exceeded his master. The religious cast of his character was observable from his childhood ; and his profiting under the instructions of his pious parents was thought so remarkable, that, it is said, his father, who afterwards suffered martyrdom, was accustomed to kiss the breast of his child, in fond persuasion that it was the dwelling-place of the Holy Ghost. But, alas ! it contained not the germs of that knowledge which the Spirit teaches in his holy word. At the age of eighteen, Origen became a teacher in the school of Alexandria, and braved many dangers in the time of the persecution, in his attendance on the martyrs. His study of the Scriptures, and of the “ heavenly philosophy,” as it is called, was most intense day and night. His life exhibited a true practical copy of his theoretical scheme. He denied himself the use of wine ; often slept on the ground ;

<sup>1</sup> Euseb. v. 25.

<sup>2</sup> Born 185—died about 252.

went barefoot ; endured cold and hunger, so much so, indeed, as greatly to endanger his life ; and, to avoid temptation, even mutilated his body. All this procured him to be admired as a wonder, and, it is said, won many over to the Christian faith, who suffered in the persecution. Among the Gentiles, he was even accounted a famous philosopher ; and philosophy was his interpreter of the book of God. “ He borrowed,” says Porphyry, “ from Cornutus, the Grecian method of the allegorical interpretation of mysteries, and applied it to the Jewish Scriptures.” He was not as yet in holy orders, and his teaching in the church, in the presence of bishops, was objected to by some ; but certain precedents were quoted in his favour, where laymen had done so, but always at the request of the bishop. He was afterwards ordained to the ministry, when at the age of forty-five, at Cesarea. From this Alexandrian school sprang the monkish recluses, whose mistaken piety peopled, at a subsequent period, the deserts of Egypt and Syria, and some ages afterwards spread over Europe.

From the Dialogues of Minucius Felix, however, which pertain to the earlier part of this century, we gather what the main body of Christians still were. He introduces a pagan saying, “ Is it not deplorable to see the wicked and desperate faction oppose the gods, form an impious conspiracy, and gathering together the dregs even of the meanest and most ignorant of the people, with weak and credulous women ? — an obscure nation, who are enemies to knowledge, mute in public, but fond of speaking in private.” — “ So great is their folly, that they esteem present torments as nothing, being apprehensive of future and uncertain punishments ; and for fear of dying after their death, they are not at all afraid to die.” — “ This impious conspiracy spreads throughout the world : they know each other by certain secret tokens, and love each other before they are acquainted ; they all call each other brethren and sisters.” — He reviles them for adoring a man that was crucified. “ What shall we say of their God’s threatening to destroy the whole world by fire, as though the order of nature could be overturned ? — and not satisfied with this extravagant notion, they add to it old wives’ fables, saying, that they shall be born again after they are dead and reduced to ashes.” “ Upon what foundation is it that they promise to themselves a happy and eternal life after death, and threaten others with eternal punishment ? And yet you ascribe to God whatever we do, as others ascribe it to fate ; and say, that those who embrace your sect, do it not of their

own mind, but are thereunto chosen; thus you make an unjust judge; who punisheth for what they do through fate and not choice<sup>1</sup>.”

The knowledge of those doctrines, however, to which these reproaches refer, seems, in a considerable measure, to have departed with this generation. About the middle, or towards the close of this century, as philosophical Christianity advances, we mark the absence of a correct knowledge of sound doctrine, and, at the same time, the manifest decay of Christian piety.

## SECT. II.

THE remaining part of the third century was, perhaps, to the world at large, the most calamitous period in the history of mankind. This era of desolation<sup>2</sup> commenced on the murder of the emperor Alexander Severus<sup>3</sup>, who was succeeded by Maximin, “a brutal savage.” His tyranny was destructive to many thousands of the noblest of the Romans; nor did the desolation end with his life: the sword was let loose only to rage more widely in the hands of the contending candidates for the supreme authority. Maximus and Balbanus, the succeeding emperors, were massacred in a sedition at Rome. “Six princes, in the space of a few months, had been cut off by the sword.” “The Persians invade the east, — the barbarians boldly attack the provinces of a declining monarchy.” The emperor Gordian met with the same fate<sup>4</sup> as his predecessors, and was succeeded by Philip, who, after a reign of four years, was also murdered<sup>5</sup>. From this time, to the death of Gallienus<sup>6</sup>, including the reigns of Decius, Gallus, and Valerian, taken captive by the Persians, “there elapsed twenty years of shame and misfortune; during which calamitous period every instant of time was marked, every province of the Roman world was afflicted by barbarous invaders and military tyrants, and the ruined empire seemed to approach the last and fatal moment of its desolation.” “The whole period was one uninterrupted series of confusion and calamity; as the empire was, at the same time and on every side, attacked by the blind fury of foreign invaders, and the wild ambition of domestic usurpers.” Nineteen usurpers to the throne are taken notice of at one time; and it is observed, that “the election of these precarious emperors, their power, and their death, are equally

<sup>1</sup> Fleury, b. v. 40.

<sup>2</sup> A.D. 235.

<sup>4</sup> A.D. 244.

<sup>3</sup> Foretold in the Fourth Seal, Rev. vi.

<sup>5</sup> A.D. 248.

<sup>6</sup> A.D. 268.



destructive to their subjects.” “Inundations, earthquakes, uncommon meteors, preternatural darkness, and a crowd of prodigies, fictitious or exaggerated,” the infidel historian tells us, “decorated this period.” “But a long and general famine was a calamity of a more serious kind. It was the inevitable consequence of rapine and oppression, which extirpated the produce of the present and the hope of future harvests. Famine is almost always followed by epidemical diseases, the effect of scarcity and unwholesome food. Other causes must, however, have contributed to the furious plague, which, from the year 250 to the year 265, raged, without interruption, in every province of the Roman empire. During some time, five thousand persons died daily at Rome, and many towns that had escaped the hands of the barbarians, were entirely depopulated.” Mr. Gibbon, indeed, almost suspects, from a document relating particularly to Alexandria, “that war, pestilence, and famine, had consumed, in a few years, the moiety of the human species<sup>1</sup> ;” insomuch, that the wild beasts of the earth were multiplied. In one instance, “five hundred wolves together” are reported to “have entered a city which was deserted of its inhabitants. After the death of Gallienus<sup>2</sup>, the empire began to recover itself: the evils of war were still indeed to be endured; but within the period of about thirty years, a series of great princes, Claudius, Aurelian, Probus, Dioclesian, and his colleagues, triumphed over the foreign and domestic enemies of the state, and re-established, with military discipline, the strength of the frontiers, and deserved the glorious titles of restorers of the Roman world.” This brings us nearly to the close of the third century.

During this period of more than sixty years, the Christians, of course, suffered in common with their fellow-subjects. Their political situation, with respect to the government, was various. The monster Maximin, Eusebius says, in hatred to the family of Alexander, the late emperor, which harboured many of the faithful, commenced a persecution against them, and issued an order that all the governors of the church should be put to death. The church had then rest from persecution for twelve years. The emperor Philip was even considered as a convert; but it does not appear that he fully relinquished idolatry. Under Decius, who succeeded him, followed the most violent persecution the church had hitherto endured. Vast numbers, it is re-

<sup>1</sup> From Euseb. vi. xxviii.

<sup>2</sup> A.D. 268.



corded, relapsed into idolatry; and it appears, both from the letters of Cyprian, and from Eusebius, that the Christian church, though greatly increased in the multitude of her professors, had materially decayed in genuine piety, since the commencement of the century. The latter observes concerning the Decian persecution, this heavy calamity had come upon the church for her sins: "our principal study is to get money and estates; we follow after pride; we are at leisure for nothing but emulation and quarrelling, and have neglected the simplicity of the faith. We have renounced this world in words only, and not in deed. Every one studies to please himself, and to displease others."

We are not therefore surprised at the fiery trial which was now to try the church, and that such multitudes proved unfaithful in the hour of trial. The persecution, indeed, was most cruelly conducted. "It seems to have been the whole employment of magistrates to persecute; swords, wild beasts, pits, red-hot irons, wheels to stretch the body, and talons of iron to tear them" — "these were the instruments of persecution." "Nothing less than the extinction of the Christian name was aimed at." "The persecution was universal<sup>1</sup>." Decius, however, reigned only about two years, when it ceased<sup>2</sup>. Gallus renewed it in a slight degree. Valerian<sup>3</sup>, for the first three years, was the friend and protector of the Christians, but after that, their determined adversary. On his captivity, Gallienus restored peace to the church, and licensed the bishops to return to their pastoral charges. A new scene followed; Christians were legally tolerated under a pagan government for forty years<sup>4</sup>; the example of Gallienus being followed by the successive emperors to the end of the century. For even Dioclesian, the last and most inveterate of the pagan persecutors, was favourable to the Christians, during the first eighteen years of his reign.

The following persons were bishops of Rome, during this period. Pontianus, who governed six years, and was succeeded by Anterus, who held the see only for one month. A miracle is related by Eusebius, but merely from report, in the appointment of his successor Fabianus. One thing, however, appears from the relation, that the election of the Roman bishop was at that time open; for it describes "all the brethren as gathered together for that purpose." It was during the presidency of this bishop,

<sup>1</sup> Milner.<sup>2</sup> A.D. 251.<sup>3</sup> A.D. 253.<sup>4</sup> From A.D. 262.

that what Eusebius relates of the emperor Philip occurred. He was desirous, it seems, to be present at certain prayers, on the vigil of Easter; but, by the laws of the church, he could not be admitted, until he had rendered an account of his faith, and made his confession among the penitents: to all this, it is said, the emperor willingly submitted. Fabianus became a martyr under the succeeding emperor Decius.

The church of Rome appears to have been so particularly exposed to danger at this time, that the people were unable, for sixteen months, to supply the place of their late bishop. A letter of the clergy, written during this interval<sup>1</sup>, to the clergy of Carthage, is still extant in the works of Cyprian. They call themselves “Your brethren that are in prison, and the presbyters, and the whole church.” Cyprian, in his letter, in which he refers to the glorious exit of the good man his colleague, addresses, “To the presbyters and deacons of Rome, the holy brethren, who stand fast,” or “to the presbyters, and to the deacons, holy brethren, standing together with them<sup>2</sup>.” The Roman clergy call Cyprian both “brother” and “papa,”—equivalent to pope—signifying father; a title then, it seems, common to all bishops. These letters plainly discover how vast a body of Christians had fallen away, through fear of punishment, in this dreadful persecution<sup>3</sup>. Many of these sorely repented of their denial of Christ, and sued most earnestly to be again admitted among the faithful. In what manner the lapsed were to be treated, appears to have been a question which, at that time, much perplexed the church. Some were for their entire exclusion; others would have relaxed the reins of discipline too easily. A practice, which gave much trouble to the rulers of the church, is noted, of the lapsed procuring letters of recommendation from their more faithful brethren, who were about to suffer martyrdom, or had maintained their confession. These letters were produced as of great authority; and, in many cases, the bishops and presbyters were absolutely compelled, contrary to their own judgments, to admit the presenters into the church. The Roman clergy, who were for a middle course, express the necessity of deferring the final settlement of the dispute, while the difficulties of the times prevent their appointing a bishop. They had, in the mean time, as the matter seemed of so great importance, assembled a council, consisting of neighbouring

<sup>1</sup> A. D. 250.

<sup>2</sup> Epist. xx. comp. Epist. xxx.

<sup>3</sup> “Aspice totum orbem pene vastatum, et ubique jacere dejectorum reliquias.”

bishops, — or bishops who happened to be then at Rome, who had probably been driven from their proper charges, and had concealed themselves in the multitude of that great city — “presbyters, deacons, confessors, as well as laymen who stood<sup>1</sup>.” In this council it was agreed to defer the reconciliation of the lapsed till the appointment of the bishop, that a proper rule of discrimination might be observed; for this they are advised, as becometh penitents, to wait in patience. An exception, however, is made in favour of those who appear sincere penitents, and are at the point of death.

All, however, were not satisfied. A party was formed, who called themselves Cathari, or the Pure, who were for excluding for ever from the communion of the church, all who had fallen in persecution; exhorting them, at the same time, to continue in penitence all their days, in hope of that mercy from God, which the church was not warranted to extend towards them here on earth.

The Roman church ventured at length<sup>2</sup> to elect a bishop, and its choice fell upon Cornelius, a person who had gradually risen through all the subordinate stations of the ministry, and to whose desert and modesty Cyprian bears an unqualified testimony. He writes that he was made bishop by the judgment of God and his Christ, by the testimony of nearly all the clergy, by the suffrage of the people then present, and of the college of ancient priests and good men<sup>3</sup>. By the latter is probably meant the bishops, and other foreign Christians, then at Rome.

The Cathari, however, separated from the church, and, by the instigation of a man of the worst of characters, named Novatus, elected another bishop in opposition to Cornelius. Of the personal character of Novatian, the person chosen, very different opinions have been entertained; some, discarding the authenticity of a letter, preserved in Eusebius as written by Cornelius, argue, that a person chosen by a party pretending to greater purity, must himself have been of high character. The letter of Cornelius itself presents a very different picture. This schism and heresy, for so the writers of the day always term it, — using these words in their scriptural sense, — was soon healed at Rome, and its chief promoters returned, with contrition, to the unity of the church; but Novatus and Novatian departed for Africa, and there perpetuated the sect called, from the latter, Novatians.

<sup>1</sup> “Pariter ac stantibus laicis.”

<sup>2</sup> A. D. 252.

<sup>3</sup> Epist. lv.

We learn from the letter of Cornelius, that in the church of Rome, at this time, there were, under the bishop, forty-six presbyters, seven deacons, seven sub-deacons, forty acolyths, fifty-two exorcists, readers, and porters, and upwards of fifteen hundred widows and infirm persons relieved by the church, the people of which, it is said, were "innumerable." Cornelius continued full three years bishop of Rome, but at length suffered martyrdom in the persecution revived by Gallus. He was succeeded by Lucius.

Cyprian, in one of his letters<sup>1</sup>, congratulates this bishop and his colleagues, who had been faithful confessors of Christ in the late persecution: "When you were prepared and ready to undergo every infliction, the Lord has withdrawn you from punishment, and has preserved you for the church.—Restored to you, the dignity of his confession is not lessened in 'your' bishop, but the priestly authority the more increased; since at the altar of God stands a prelate<sup>2</sup>, who may exhort the people, not by words, but by deeds, to arm themselves for confession and the sustaining of martyrdom; and, at the approach of Antichrist, may prepare his hosts to battle, not only by the exciting of his voice and discourse, but by the example of his own faith and courage."

"I understand, dearest brother, and, with full conviction of mind, discern the wholesome and holy designs of the Divine Majesty, in this unlooked for persecution which lately arose, when the secular power on a sudden burst forth against the church of Christ, against bishop Cornelius, the blessed martyr, and against you all: it was to confound and silence the heretical, the Lord would shew which was the church; who was his sole bishop, chosen by the divine rule; who were the presbyters joined with the bishop in his priestly honour; which was the united and true people of Christ, tied together by the charity of the Lord's flock; who they were whom the enemy would set upon; who, on the contrary, they were whom the devil would spare as his own. For the adversary of Christ attacks and assaults only the camp and soldiers of Christ; the prostrate heretics, and their operations, he at once despises and passes by; and seeks to cast down those whom he sees to stand."

Lucius survived his election only eight months, and was followed by Stephen. In his time, no small controversy arose, whether heretics, on their submission to the church, should be

<sup>1</sup> Epist. lxi.

<sup>2</sup> Antistes.

rebaptized, or be received, as is asserted to have been the ancient manner, by prayer and laying on of hands. Cyprian maintained, with great zeal, the former opinion; Stephen resisted it as an innovation. He filled the see of Rome two years, and was succeeded by Xystus, who held it eleven years, and was followed by Dionysius. He governed the church of Rome nine years, and was succeeded by Felix.

We have the truth very ably stated by this Roman bishop, against a refined species of Socinianism which then appeared in the East, and which made the Redeemer only a deified man: "We believe that our Saviour Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin: we believe that he himself is the Eternal God and the Word, and not a mere man whom God took into himself, in such a manner as that the man should be distinct from him: for the Son of God is perfect God, and was also made perfect man by being incarnate of the Virgin<sup>1</sup>."

Felix continued five years, Eutychianus only ten months, Caius fifteen years; Marcellinus succeeded, whom the great persecution under Dioclesian overtook.

The growing importance of the bishop of this see, at the head of the Italian bishops, is remarkably discovered by an imperial edict issued in the time of bishop Dionysius, which regards the bishops of Rome as the proper referees in the disputes of the Christians. This happened in the affair of Paul Samosatenus, bishop of Antioch, and is, perhaps, the first instance of the appeal of the rulers of the church to the civil power, to enforce their decisions. This bishop of Antioch, besides being objected to on account of scandalous conduct, secular pride, and tyranny, had publicly avowed the heresy that represented the Redeemer as a mere man. A numerous synod of neighbouring bishops, such being the custom of this time, assembled at Antioch, excommunicated and deposed him, and chose, or caused to be chosen, another bishop in his room. But Paul refused to submit, or to resign the house belonging to his see. On this, the emperor Aurelian was applied to, who, Eusebius remarks, decreed well, that the house should be allotted to him of whom the bishops of Italy and Rome approved. This circumstance not only serves to mark, but would itself have a tendency further to promote, the greatness of the Roman church. It was now, indeed, regarded among the Christians, as "the principal church," "the chair of Peter;"

<sup>1</sup> Fleury.

but no kind of jurisdiction or authority over other churches and pastors was as yet admitted. The episcopal character was considered as one and the same in all the bishops. The text on which the papists ground the authority of the pope, "Thou art Peter," &c., was considered as spoken alike to all the apostles, of whom the bishops were all equally the successors. "The church was built upon the bishops." The practice, often noticed in this age, of assembling together the neighbouring bishops in synods, in which the bishops of the greater churches presided, had indeed given them something of a superior influence among their brethren, especially the bishops of Rome, Antioch, Alexandria, and Carthage. Thus we remark that, in the imperial edict of Aurelian, the reference is not made to the bishop of Rome personally, but to the bishops of Italy and Rome, that is, to the synod of Italian bishops, of which the Roman bishop was the head. It was such an assembly of bishops that condemned and deposed the bishop of Antioch on that occasion, and instances of these synods are very frequent in this age.

But whatever might be the official importance of some of these pastors in their own age, the historian of the church is principally concerned in tracing the appearance of those great men, of what order soever they may be, who, in the period of their ascendant, influenced the opinions of mankind, and by the writings which they have left, have conveyed to posterity all the information now to be had, of what was then passing in the church. The two great luminaries of the era of which we are now treating, were Origen and Cyprian. Of the former we have already taken some notice. He lived till the time of the Decian persecution, and suffered much for his Christian profession. His works are numerous; but whatever benefit the church might have derived from his labours, in the extension of the numbers of her professors, and in the vindication of her name against her philosophical opponents, we can only regard him as one great instrument of introducing those opinions and sentiments of the Alexandrian school, which now began to eradicate the truth in the minds of multitudes of professing Christians, until, at length, almost all the leading characters of the Christian name, of which history knows any thing, are become involved, more or less, in this new Egyptian darkness.

The latter, Cyprian, flourished as bishop of Carthage, from the year of our Lord two hundred and forty-eight, to the year two hundred and fifty-eight, when he suffered martyrdom. He



was certainly the greatest teacher of his day, and his writings are the chief source of our information respecting the state of the church in these primitive times.

Concerning the doctrine and practice of the church, in the apostolic age, which it most concerns us to study and to imitate, we have, happily, the inspired oracles for our guide. The condition of that same society, a hundred and fifty years after the apostles had fallen asleep, must be collected, chiefly, from the works of Cyprian. In the philosopher Justin, in Clemens, Origen, and the fathers of the Alexandrian school, we trace rather the history of the invaders of that church, which held the distinguishing tenets of true religion as delivered in the divine oracles. In Cyprian we learn the state of the invaded party; how the truth once delivered to the saints, was now held; how its doctrines and precepts were now taught, by those "who seemed to be pillars." We learn the condition of that religion, which had once triumphed over the powers of darkness, but now was not able long to stand before a more masked and insidious attack of the same adversaries; which saw the foundations of the truth gradually undermined and giving way, till, at length, all was laid in ruins, and the holy city trampled beneath the feet of her new masters, who, indeed, extended her name and her dominion, but changed almost all her original principles and institutions.

This, however, was a work of ages; and it should always be remembered, that church history can give us only the general results and changes introduced by the conflicting opinions of professed Christians. The visible church receives her character from the majority of her leaders and members. Of the true history of religion, in this age, little trace is left in public records. It could be learned only in the lives of those, of whom no one wrote; of those who, in obscurer stations, possessed the spirit of the Gospel, while men more conspicuous for their situation, seemed to be contending more for its form;—of those who long struggled with the prevailing corruptions of the times in which they lived, but whose voice was overpowered, and they died in obscurity! Or it is seen only in the sufferings of those whom, in the midst of corruption, the Lord "loved and chastened;" whom he tried in the furnace of affliction, and purified to himself in the midst of persecution. But from the preservation of the writings of so eminent a Christian teacher as Cyprian, though we cannot learn the secret history of "the reserved in Israel," we may form a pretty correct estimate of

the general state of the public sentiment and profession of the church in these days. We shall find, I think, the same society, or chartered company, well united and compact in all its parts; the line of distinction between it and the world around it visible and well preserved; and all its original institutions entire in form. If we have cause to think that the vital spirit which animates the body is enfeebled and fast ebbing, and that somewhat of decay and alteration is discernible, yet the features are the same; and what is most distorted, we remember to have observed as distinctive and characteristic in the fairer proportions of youth. If the alteration strikes us at first, and we sigh for the destruction of time, yet we say: "It is the same!"

Thus, in the outward fabric of the church, when Cyprian tells us that the church consists "in the bishop and clergy, and in all who stand<sup>1</sup>," we cannot fail to recognise the form of polity in the apostolic church of Jerusalem: "James, and the elders, and all the multitude."

The bishop, with his presbyters or priests—*sacerdotes*,—as they are indifferently called, appear as objects of great respect and veneration, "highly esteemed in love for their work's sake." Their government, in the concerns of the society, evidently rested on a popular basis. If Cyprian speaks of "the sacerdotal authority and power<sup>2</sup>," he mentions also "the faithful and incorrupted majesty of the people;" and tells us, "the maxim of his own government was, to do nothing alone, by his own private opinion, without the advice of his fellow-presbyters, and the consent of the people;"—"as mutual honour requires<sup>3</sup>." At the same time, the episcopal character, as derived from the apostles, was the very bond of union and centre of the visible association. They gathered around the bishop, and waited on his ministrations, as indeed "the angel of the church." Cyprian has, somewhere, the metaphor of the queen-bee; and the regimen of the hive may, in various respects, stand as emblematical of the polity of a primitive Christian church, and of the planting of its new societies, which even the heretics or separatists of the day copied as correctly as they could. But these were regarded by Cyprian, and his contemporaries, as destitute of all spiritual

<sup>1</sup> "Ecclesia in episcopo et clero et in omnibus stantibus sit constituta." Epist. xxxiv.—That is, in the bishop and presbyters, and the people—or the deacons and people, who stand around them in their church assembly or consistory, or who had stood faithful in the time of trial.

<sup>2</sup> Epist. lix.

<sup>3</sup> Epist. xi.



power, and as being no churches, because they had not the true episcopal character among them. Adverting to St. Peter's answer to our Lord, (John, vi. 68,) he observes, " Here Peter speaks, upon whom the church was built; teaching and shewing, in the name of the church, that although the disobedient and proud multitude of those, who liked to hear, might depart, yet the church does not recede from Christ; and the people united to the priest, and the flock adhering to their shepherd, they are the church. Hence you should know that the bishop is in the church, and the church is in the bishop; and if any are not with the bishop, they are not in the church; and that those vainly flatter themselves, who, not having peace with the priests of God, privately creep in, and secretly, with certain persons, believe that they communicate; since the church, which is catholic, is one, and cannot be cut into parts nor divided, but is connected and joined together, by the cement of the priests, cohering among themselves one with another<sup>1</sup>.

We perceive, therefore, that, according to the notions of these times, a bishop departing from the church, took not with him his apostolical character; neither could a body of people, without the judgment and concurrence of the episcopate in the general church, originate or change that office among themselves; or, according to the interpretation then given to that text, they would not be built upon the rock Peter. But for the successor of Peter, they did not then look to Rome exclusively, but to the episcopal character, as held by all the bishops of the general church, which was considered as one and the same, and as indivisible. But the neighbouring bishops interfered no further than to hold a consistory of the church, to sanction the catholicity of their proceedings, and to convey the episcopal character on the person of the people's choice, to whose sufficiency the clergy gave their testimony. This appears from a letter of Cyprian and the African bishops, to some churches of Spain, concerning two bishops who had defiled themselves with idolatries to escape persecution, and had presumed, contrary to the laws of the universal church, still to exercise their sacred functions. Cyprian and his brethren thought this an occasion when they might apply the words of Moses respecting the people's separating themselves from Korah, Dathan, and Abiram<sup>2</sup>. " Wherefore the people, obeying the precepts of the Lord, and fearing God, ought to separate themselves

<sup>1</sup> Epist. lxvi.

<sup>2</sup> Numb. xvi. 26.

from a sinful ruler — *præposito* — nor ought they to communicate together at the sacrifices of a sacrilegious priest; since the ‘people’ themselves have chiefly the power, either of choosing worthy priests, or of refusing the unworthy.” — “Wherefore, respecting the right celebration of ordinations, is diligently to be observed and retained what, from divine tradition and apostolical observance, is retained among us, and almost in every province — that the bishops of the province who are nearest, should repair to the people, for whom a ruler is to be ordained,” and the “bishop be chosen, the people being present:” and thus, “by the suffrage of all the brotherhood, and by the judgment of the assembled bishops, the episcopate might be transferred from one to another<sup>1</sup>.”

It appears plainly from Cyprian’s correspondence, that the primitive Christians of this age attached to the clergy and their functions, many notions taken from the priesthood and administrations of the patriarchal and Jewish priests. The same character and consideration is challenged for them, as “taken from among men, and ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that they may offer gifts and sacrifices” — though not sacrifices for sin. The Christian minister was, in this age, certainly regarded as a priest serving at an altar, as well as a teacher and preacher of the Gospel. The altar, if we may so speak, was the chief implement of worship. The altars of the primitive Christians cannot indeed be compared to that altar, among the Jews, where the atonement was made, by the sacrifice of the victim; but it may justly be compared to the altar of incense, where the continual memorial was offered, or where the body of the peace-offering was laid, of which those who were to partake of the altar were to eat. The presenting of the bread and wine, which were to be blessed, as consecrated emblems of the Saviour — once offered; the presents and alms which the people brought; the prayers of the ministers for the people; the mentioning of the names of benefactors, of the faithful deceased, and of the martyrs, in the thanksgivings, — in whose names also presents were suffered to be brought, as still belonging to the church; — all these services were considered in the character of oblations, and sacrifices — in a lower sense, offered to God in the name of Christ, by the hands of his appointed ministers officiating in his place<sup>2</sup>. To be allowed a

<sup>1</sup> See Epist. lxxvii.

<sup>2</sup> “Ille sacerdos vice Christi verè fungitur, qui id quod Christus fecit imitatur.” Epis. lxxiii.

share in these oblations, was part of the privileges of those who were in communion with the church, but it was denied to the lapsed, till restored by repentance, the public confession of their sins<sup>1</sup>, and the imposition of the hands of the bishop and clergy<sup>2</sup>. "The offering of their names," or "offering for them," is connected with their receiving the elements in the Eucharist<sup>3</sup>. But it is very far from being confounded with it, as in subsequent ages in the popish mass. The bread and wine presented in the daily offering, — for, till long after this period, the celebration of the Eucharist was daily in the Christian church, — were considered as part of the oblation and sacrifice, as well as the alms of Christians, in the sense in which St. Paul uses the term 'sacrifice.' The elements were then considered as consecrated to be the emblems of the body and blood of Christ; no longer "common bread and wine," but effectual signs to the faithful, of their participation in the body and blood of Christ. Cyprian thought that the petition in the Lord's Prayer, respecting our daily bread, might spiritually be applied to the daily receiving of the Eucharist.

Into this holy fellowship, as externally representing the mystical body of Christ, believing penitents were still admitted by baptism. In the state of catechumens, or candidates for admission to the communion of the Christian church, they for some time received instructions respecting the "principles of the doctrines of Christ." Here were "laid the foundations of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God." In the character of believing penitents, they were admitted to the sacrament of baptism: at the same time no question whatever is made respecting the baptism of infants. When a difficulty is made about receiving them before the age of circumcision, Cyprian argues: "To the greatest sinners, when they afterwards believe, remission of sins is given, and from baptism and grace no one is prohibited. How much more ought not an infant to be prohibited, who, recently born, has committed no sin, except that being born carnally after Adam, he has contracted in his first nativity the contagion of the ancient death? who for this very reason comes more easily to receive remission of sins, because to him are remitted not his own sins, but the sins of another<sup>4</sup>."

It was held that, by the sacrament of baptism, the corruptions — *sordes* — of the old man are washed away; the ancient sins of death — probably sins of the ancient death — are forgiven; that

<sup>1</sup> Epist. xxxiv. &c.<sup>2</sup> Epist. xvii.<sup>3</sup> Epist. xvi.<sup>4</sup> Epist. lxiv.

by a heavenly regeneration we are made the sons of God, and are restored to life eternal by the sanctification of Divine washing<sup>1</sup>.

The doctrine of "the laying on of hands," as betokening the reception of the Holy Ghost the Comforter, as it follows in "St. Paul's catechism<sup>2</sup>," was visibly held forth in the rite of confirmation. Alluding to the transaction recorded in Acts, viii. 14, Cyprian observes: "Which thing is now also performed amongst us, inasmuch as those who are baptised in the church should be presented to the bishops—*præpositis*—of the church, and by our prayer and the imposition of hands should obtain the Holy Spirit, and be perfected by the Lord's seal<sup>3</sup>." The ideas of the primitive Christians respecting the relation between baptism and confirmation, we perceive in another place: "No one is born by the imposition of hands, when he receives the Holy Ghost."—"It is in baptism that the old man dies and the new man is born, the blessed apostle proves, when he says, '*he hath saved us by the washing of regeneration*:' so that he that is already born receives the Spirit, like as was done in the first man Adam; for God first formed him, and then breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. For it is not possible that the spirit should be received, unless *he* exists first who may receive it<sup>4</sup>."

That the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment, was not yet corrupted by the doctrine of a purgatory, will be plain from the following short extract. "When we depart out of this life, there is then no place for repentance, no effect of satisfaction. Here, life is either lost or retained; here, in the worship of God, and in the fruit of faith, provision is made for eternal salvation. Nor is any one stopped, either by sins or by years, from coming to obtain salvation. While we remain in this life, no repentance is too late. A way lies open to the mercy of God, and to those who seek and who know the truth, the access is easy. Thou, in the very departure of life, mayest pray for thy sins, and mayest invoke God,—the one and true God, by confession and by faith of the acknowledging of him. Pardon is vouchsafed to him that confesses, and to him that believeth, saving mercy is conceded from the Divine goodness, and in death itself a passage is found to immortality. This grace doth Christ impart,—this office he assigns to his own compassion, in subduing death with the trophy of the cross,—in

<sup>1</sup> Epist. lxxiv.<sup>2</sup> Heb. vi.<sup>3</sup> Epist. lxxiii.<sup>4</sup> Epist. lxxiv.

redeeming the believer by the price of his blood;—in reconciling man to God the Father,—in quickening a mortal by heavenly regeneration. Him (if it can be done—*si fieri potest*) we may all follow, by his sacrament and signal be enrolled; he opens to us the way of life—he restores us to paradise—he will conduct us to the kingdom of heaven. With him we shall ever live, being made by him the children of God: with him we shall ever triumph, being restored by his own blood. We shall be Christ's, glorified together with Christ, blessed of God the Father, with perpetual happiness, rejoicing always in the sight of God, and always rendering thanks to God. Nor can it be but that he should be always joyful and thankful, who, from having been obnoxious to death, is made secure of immortality<sup>1</sup>."

Thus we collect, that "the form of true doctrine delivered to the saints, is still retained and set forth to view, not only in the instructions of her ministers, but, as I conceive they ought to be, in the public solemnities of the church. That popery afterwards arose from the distortion and perversion of these ancient ceremonies and solemn observances, affords no argument against their sacred origin, and ought not to dissuade from their proper use, according to the original design. There was something of weight in the censure which the popish bigots passed on some alterations of the more zealous reformers, that they had reduced religion to a "mere preachment."

Respecting the order and the leading rites of the church, in this age, I think there is no reason to suspect that they were of recent origin. No one can use a language more abhorrent of any innovation, or of following the commandments and doctrines of men, in these matters, than Cyprian<sup>2</sup>. And if, in the space of a hundred and fifty years, from the times of the apostles, some few innovations and corruptions had crept into the external forms of the administration of the Christian religion, it is but fair to conclude, that the great outline of a Christian society, and all its great and leading ordinances, had as yet preserved the same place and symmetry as in the original fabric erected under the care and superintendence of the apostles of Christ. That the form would remain entire, when the life and spirit had almost departed, is more than probable; and also, that in these circumstances forms and ceremonies would be too much magnified,—perhaps by many the shadow taken for the substance, and the outward and visible sign confounded with the inward and

<sup>1</sup> Ad Demetrianum.

<sup>2</sup> Epist. lxiii.

spiritual grace — is but analogous with what generally happens in the history of churches.

We arise from the perusal of Cyprian, with reflections of the following nature. It is not, indeed, easy to estimate the proper force of the phrases of an ancient language, but we occasionally observe, in this father of the church, a style which is hardly consistent with a clear view of the doctrines of the Gospel. The high-fraught praises of martyrs and confessors, of alms deeds, and of the merits of a single life, though there were no compulsory vows, sound to us very un-evangelical, and savour of the leaven of the Alexandrian school.

We clearly perceive the retention of a strict moral discipline, with respect to the exclusion of notorious delinquents; but this was far from being sufficient to retain that purity which some have demanded in the external church. The parable of the tares, and 2 Tim. ii. 20, was then applied to describe its state; and to attempt to separate the tares from the wheat, by human judgment, is spoken of as a sacrilegious presumption<sup>1</sup>. We find, too, that in this age of martyrdom, to have withstood all the trials and tortures of confession, was not always a safeguard against the more common seductions of pride or licentiousness<sup>2</sup>.

Several documents discover, that about the middle of this century, the purity of morals had much fallen in the Christian church, and, it should seem, in exact proportion as the doctrines of Divine grace were lowered, and the spirituality of her sacred ordinances were lost sight of. In the following complaint of Cyprian, much, doubtless, must be charged to the feelings of the zealous pastor, but it affords a sad picture of the corruptions of the external church, long before it could have been injured by incorporation with the state. “Each studied to increase his property, and forgetting what believers actually did formerly under the apostles, and ought always to do, they, with the ardour of insatiable avarice, lent themselves wholly to the multiplying of their wealth. Religious devotion was not in the priests, nor uncorrupted faith in the ministers; in works was no mercy, in manners, no discipline. Among the men was the corrupted beard<sup>3</sup>, among the women, the painted countenance—*forma fucata*;—the eyes adulterated from the workmanship of God, the hair falsely coloured. Cunning were the frauds to deceive the hearts of the simple, crafty the stratagems to circumvent the brethren. They abstained not from uniting in the bond of matri-

<sup>1</sup> Epist. liv.

<sup>2</sup> Epist. xiv.

<sup>3</sup> Some fashion, supposed to be a violation of Lev. xix. 27.



mony with infidels, prostituting the members of Christ to Gentiles. Not only rash swearing was not unknown, but even perjury. With swollen pride would they despise those who were set over them, with envenomed lips curse each other, and with obstinate hatred separate one from another. Many bishops, who ought to have been for an admonition and example to others, despising the superintendence of divine things, became the superintendents of secular affairs : leaving their episcopal seats — *cathedras* — deserting their people, and wandering in other provinces, they occupied themselves in some gainful business ; they cared not to relieve the hungry brethren in the church, but to accumulate a great deal of money, to seize estates by fraudulent pretences, and to increase their wealth by multiplied usury<sup>1</sup>.”

This refers to the corruption in the church before the persecution under Decius, which broke out about the middle of the century, and in which the faithful saw and owned the chastening judgment of God. No doubt, this awful visitation in some measure checked for a time the vicious contagion ; but after a season of peace and prosperity which followed, contemporary writers, towards the close of the century, do not afford a more favourable picture of the visible church in their days. But it is not reasonable to suppose that the subjects of these complaints were general, or to be taken notice of in all parts of the universal church ; still, they are sufficient to mark a considerable declension in the piety and moral purity of Christians.



## CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

HISTORY OF THE LAST PAGAN PERSECUTION, AND THE SUBSEQUENT ESTABLISHMENT OF CHRISTIANITY, UNDER CONSTANTINE, TO BE THE RELIGION OF THE STATE ; WITH THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH TO THE FINAL DIVISION OF THE EASTERN AND WESTERN EMPIRES, AT THE CLOSE OF THE FOURTH CENTURY.—THE AGE OF ATHANASIUS AND AMBROSE.

### SECT. I.

IN narrating the history of the church in the preceding centuries, we have had little occasion to dwell much upon the civil history of the state ; but we are now arrived at an era when the

<sup>1</sup> De Lapsis.

events of these histories are much intermixed, and the concerns of the Christian religion become a prominent object in civil society, and especially in the revolutions of the Roman government. The church, as a visible society formed upon earth, has hitherto been a body totally unconnected with the state; held together by its own laws and discipline, and governed by a spiritual authority, totally distinct from the rule of the civil magistrate. It had, indeed, ever been a maxim inculcated in the church, from the clearest dictates of the oracles of God, that the most entire subjection and conscientious obedience should be rendered to the sovereign authority of the state, as to the ordinance of God; and, in the most trying circumstances, the rule had not been violated: but, in the politics of the world, and in the revolutions of the imperial government, Christians had as yet no other concern than to learn whether they might be permitted, in peace, to enjoy their religious privileges, or must be compelled to endure persecution for Christ, and “all the day long be counted as sheep for the slaughter, for his name sake.”

It was in these circumstances that the Christian church had grown to its present extent and greatness; not only without the patronage of the civil government, but generally as an object of its jealousy and bitterest hatred. The persecutions it had endured, had, indeed, at different times, checked its growth; and these persecutions had evidently been directed by a mysterious Providence, to winnow and to purify his floor. For in the church, considered as a visible society on earth, as in every other human society and body politic, there was a perpetual tendency to degenerate, and to fall below the professed standard, both in faith and manners; and this discovered itself especially in those intervals of peace and prosperity, which had been vouchsafed to the Christian community. The more it grew in the estimation of mankind, and increased the number of its professors, the less pure and spiritual was the society. Persecution thinned its numbers; but the trial chastened its genuine surviving members, at the same time that it shewed the apostasy of the unsound. This only prepared the church for new victories; and these again, when achieved, disclosed and nurtured the seeds of corruption within her. Still, however, she was winning her way in the public estimation; her ordinances of a reasonable worship, and the morals of her people, when at the lowest ebb, could not but appear in a favourable light, when contrasted with the abominable idolatries and the dissolute manners of the heathen world around her. The faithfulness of her martyrs and confessors,



forcibly struck the attention of mankind, and her extensive charities to the poor were always a recommending grace in the church; so that the Christian religion had always a tendency, when let alone, to spread its profession far wider than the actual triumphs of her spiritual doctrines over the hearts of men. Hence her prodigious increase, and hence her corresponding corruption, as a body, in times of peace and prosperity.

Such had been the situation of the church in the former part of the last century; much increased in the numbers of her professors, and much deteriorated in the purity of her faith and practice. The Decian persecution came upon her about the middle of the century, and was acknowledged, by her faithful pastors, to be a just punishment for the sins of her priests and her people. There is little doubt that, for a time, this had a good and salutary effect. But a season of longer prosperity and of public favour followed, with little or no interruption, till the end of the century. The church became enlarged beyond all former precedent. A crisis might almost seem to be approaching, between the ancient religion of paganism and the growing profession of Christianity.

The consequence was, one of the most remarkable eras and revolutions recorded in history. We see at first all the powers and constituted authorities of the pagan world combined together, as if it were the last effort of the prince of darkness, to crush, before it should be too late, the new religion which was spreading so widely among mankind. The era of martyrs follows. But it is paganism, and not Christianity, that receives its death-wound in this contest. We perceive, on a sudden, all the powers and authorities of the civilised world, as if dispossessed, by a stronger hand, of the demon of idolatry who actuated them, become subservient to the external peace and honourable maintenance of the religion which they had been combined to destroy.

The Roman world was at this period governed by four princes, who shared the sovereign authority. Dioclesian, who originally possessed the imperial power, had associated with himself in the dignity of Augustus, Maximian; and each of these had nominated one to the dignity of Cæsar: the former nominated Galerius, the latter, Constantius. Dioclesian, in the first part of his reign, had been very favourable to the Christians. Some are described as having employment about his person, and as having access, in the character of teachers, to the members of the imperial families. The bishops of the church are spoken of, at that period, as commanding great respect and reverence from

all classes. The multitudes of people that flocked to their places of worship, are described as being innumerable ; so that the former buildings were not sufficient to contain them, and wide and spacious churches were erected in every city. This prosperous state of things had continued for some time,—“ so long,” says the contemporary historian Eusebius, “ as the heavenly hand of God upheld and visited his people.” But this prosperity, he remarks, led to great degeneracy. He notes particularly the dissensions and schisms which arose among the Christians while the world was disposed to honour them, and which deprived them of the good opinion of many. They exposed and abused one another “ with the weapons of spite and sharp spears of opprobrious words : so that they raised contentions, bishop against bishop, and people against people.” — “ Last of all,” continues the historian, “ when our cursed hypocrisy and dissimulation had reached to the brim of maliciousness, the heavy hand of God’s high judgment, after his wonted manner, began softly, by little and little, to visit us.” The first symptoms of approaching judgment, it seems, was some ill treatment which the Christians in the army had to endure from their superiors, on account of their religion. “ But,” says Eusebius, “ we were not at all moved by these things ; but, instead of seeking to avert the anger of God, we heaped sin on sin, and thinking, like careless Epicureans, that God did not regard, and would never visit us for our sins : and they that appeared as our shepherds, laying aside the rule of piety, quarrelled, and promoted divisions one against another, and proceeding in mutual hatred and contention with an ambition that differed little from tyranny itself.”

Such was the description of the Christian church, at least of some of the more conspicuous parts of it, when the last persecution, under Dioclesian, burst forth upon it, and executed the vengeance of God. The old emperor, it is recorded, was incited to this measure by the enmity of the Cæsar Galerius, who was instigated by the idolatrous priests. With some reluctance he yielded to his wishes ; but, at length, from the accident of a fire which broke out in his palace, and which was industriously charged upon the Christians, Dioclesian was brought over entirely to the cruel counsels of Galerius<sup>1</sup>. The great church of Nicomedia, where the emperor resided, which is described as an edifice towering above the imperial palace, was regularly attacked by a body of the guards, who first broke into it, and afterwards

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius.

levelled it with the ground. The interior of the church, when laid open by its violators, presented a different scene from Christian churches of a later period ; nothing was found but the volumes of the Scriptures.

The first edicts of the government ordered the demolition of the churches, and the burning of the sacred writings ; that those who possessed any honour or distinction in society should be degraded, and all freedmen deprived of their liberty. Next followed an edict, that all the pastors should be thrown into prison. It was then ordered that they should be compelled to sacrifice to the heathen gods. “ Many of the governors of the church,” Eusebius tells us, “ endured, and that cheerfully, most bitter torments, shewing the examples of most valiant and noble conflicts. Many, indeed, fainted at the first onset, and others were overcome by extremity of sufferings ; yet still a goodly company was found more than conquerors through Christ that loved them.”

“ It cannot be told or expressed by the tongue,” says our historian, “ how many and what sort of martyrs were to be seen throughout every city and village.” The torture endured by a noble person who had hitherto enjoyed one of the highest offices about the emperor’s person, and who was formerly much beloved of him, is given us by Eusebius, as a specimen of this persecution, which raged in every part of the empire. “ He was publicly brought forth, and commanded to sacrifice. On his boldly refusing, he was ordered to be hoisted up on high, naked, and his whole body to be scourged, and the flesh rent in pieces with the lash of the whip, till he should be compelled to yield. The afflicted victim endured all this till his bones lay all bare.” They then poured vinegar mixed with salt into his wounds ; still he remained constant in his refusal, and rejoiced in his sufferings. His tormentors then prepared a gridiron, with hot burning coals, and he was laid on it, to be consumed over a slow fire, so that he might be kept lingering as long as possible in the extremity of torture. All was in vain, — he was faithful unto death. “ So valiant as you hear,” concludes the historian, “ was, in his martyrdom, one of the emperor’s pages, corresponding to his name, for he was called Peter.” — “ And what happened to others was nothing inferior.”

I shall subjoin but one specimen more of the persecution of which Eusebius was himself an eye-witness in Egypt. “ No speech can sufficiently declare the punishments and torments used by the martyrs throughout Thebais. Their bodies were

torn in pieces by shells of sea-fish instead of the claws of wild beasts. Other martyrs were torn asunder by trees bent from their natural position, fastened to their legs, and suddenly let go. Every method of brutal indecency was also had recourse to, to shock the constancy of the Christian women in their martyrdom. All this mischief continued not a few days, or a short time, but for many years. Sometimes more than ten, at other times more than twenty, were executed; at others again thirty, sixty, and even a hundred in one day, of men, women, and very little children, after the bitter taste of various torments, were put to death. I myself, being then present at an execution, saw with my own eyes a great multitude, whereof some were burnt, others beheaded, until the sword became blunt, and the tormentors wearied, so that others took their places in their turns. There I beheld the bright and noble countenances, the heavenly courage and boldness of those who built their faith on Jesus Christ our Saviour. As soon as sentence was pronounced and judgment given upon these, others stood forth and presented themselves at the bar, and made confession of their faith, and, after enduring every species of torture, received with cheerfulness the final sentence of condemnation; and, placing their trust in God, joyfully sung hymns and psalms of thanksgiving, even to the last gasp."

These extracts, from a contemporary and an eye-witness, may serve to give us some idea of that last pagan persecution, which, for the space of ten years successively, raged with more or less violence, in every part of the Roman world, against the followers of Christ. "It was a persecution more systematically planned, and more artfully conducted, than those which Christians had ever known. Indeed, victory at first shewed itself in favour of the persecutors, and Christianity seemed to be near at an end<sup>1</sup>."

But how different was the actual result! God was at this time preparing for himself a protector of his afflicted church, in one of the imperial family. This was Constantine, the son of the Cæsar Constantius, whom God raised up like another Cyrus, and prospered his arms to the conquest of all his competitors, that he might liberate and reinstate his dispersed and persecuted people.

Constantius, at the time of his death, was administering the distant province of Britain; he had ever been favourable, as far

<sup>1</sup> Milner. Clearly symbolised by the Fifth Seal, Rev. vi. 9, &c.

as he could interfere, towards the Christians. It is said that, when the orders had been received for the discharge of all Christians in the public employ, he assembled those of them that were his attendants, and laid before them the alternative of forsaking their religion or quitting his service. To their no small surprise, he detained those who were faithful to their God, and dismissed the rest. He was, however, unable to arrest entirely this persecution, in which it is reported that St. Alban, the proto-martyr of Britain, fell. Constantius died at York, A. D. 306. His son, who was at that time serving, as a kind of hostage, in the army of Galerius, made his escape with difficulty, on hearing the news of his father's illness, and arrived just in time to see him on his death-bed. He soon shewed himself the protector of the Christians. The lives of the chief persecutors terminated in a manner so remarkable, that the men of that generation seemed to have acknowledged the visible interference of Heaven. Within a short period, Dioclesian, in his retreat, was seized with a disease which deprived him of his senses. Maximian also retired from the exercise of authority, and met with a disgraceful death. Galerius, smitten with a horrible disease, relented in his persecution, permitted the Christians to rebuild their churches, and asked their prayers, as his competitor, Licinius, had already done. "So amazingly were affairs now changed, that the contending emperors courted the favour of the poor persecuted Christians<sup>1</sup>." The death of Galerius Maximin, whom Eusebius calls the "ring-leader in the persecution," was very remarkable and very shocking, bearing a strong resemblance, as it would appear, to that of Herod Agrippa, recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, "when the angel of the Lord smote him, and he was eaten with worms."

A sight, visibly marking the interposition of God, in which way soever it may be regarded, next arrests our attention,—a Roman emperor marching under the banners of the cross!—Constantine proceeding from the west to the deliverance of Rome from the tyrant Maxentius.

What induced Constantine to assume these banners, and to patronise the Christians, has been matter of frequent discussion. We have his own account, as related by himself to Eusebius, and attested by an oath; and it seems as extraordinary as the miracle related, to reject it on the supposition that so great and sudden was the change of men's minds every where, that the

<sup>1</sup> Milner. Euseb. Vita Constant.

emperor invented the story from political motives, and swore to its truth in his old age.

Eusebius describes him as having at first adopted his father's views of religion, who, discarding the pagan deities, had addressed his prayers "to the only true God, the Governor of all things," — but without any reference, as it appears, to Revelation, or to the Christians. Constantine imitated his example, and, as he marched at the head of his army, there appeared to him in the sky, soon after the sun had passed the meridian, the bright figure of a cross, bearing this inscription, "IN HOC VINCE," "By this conquer." He described himself as having seen an appearance of Christ, in a vision at night, enforcing the assumption of this banner. He was at this time not distinctly acquainted with Christ and his religion; but he resolved to worship that God only who had appeared unto him. He immediately sent for priests and religious men of that religion, and inquired of them who this God was, and the meaning of the sign of the cross. He learned from them that Christ, whom he had seen in his vision, was "the only-begotten Son of God, and that the sign of the cross which appeared unto him, was a token and trophy of immortality, and of the victory which Christ had gained over death." Accordingly, he assumed the cross as the standard of his armies; and, from that time, became a careful reader of the Scriptures, and had constantly about him ministers and professors of the Christian religion, whom he consulted, and in the efficacy of whose prayers he had much confidence.

His arms were blessed with extraordinary success against all his competitors. The last remnants of paganism, with its priests and augurs, assembled around Licinius, and assured him, by their oracles, of his success against the enemy of the gods; but the champions of the cross prevailed, and Constantine became sole emperor of the Roman world. His edicts restored to the Christians their forfeited estates, and to the church her public property and lands. They who had been banished were recalled, and liberty was granted to those who had been cast into prison. Among the public property thus restored to the church, was the burying-ground of the martyrs; and the church was declared to be the heir of the martyrs who had died without relatives. Christian churches were erected every where at the public expense, or by individuals excited by the example of the emperor; and many bishops and private Christians were advanced to wealth and honour by his munificence.



The state in which Constantine found the Christian church, which he took under his patronage, was far from being favourable; all their sufferings had not put an end to the disputes and animosities of Christians among themselves. The conduct of some of the body, his biographer informs us, was sufficient to have prejudiced the emperor altogether against the new religion he had embraced. It appears that the affairs of the church required the interposition of a powerful umpire, to settle its contentions, and to curb the injurious restlessness of the turbulent, as much as it needed the sword of a deliverer, to rescue it from the oppression of its persecutors.

Constantine certainly seems to have acted at first with great temper and moderation, in the former as well as in the latter capacity; "as if," says Eusebius, "God had ordained him universal bishop." And this appears to be the origin of that visitorial power which Christian princes have since claimed and exercised in the concerns of the church. The fact of the inconveniences and abuses of this authority having been always in exercise, becomes a very palpable object in the subsequent history of the church, and has led many zealous churchmen, of different denominations, to deprecate all such interference of the royal authority, or of the civil power, under what form soever, as not congenial with the independence and liberties of the church. But it may be questioned, when we consider the state of the external church from this era to the present time, what would have been the comparative evils of any other system. Some will see a providential dispensation in this change in ecclesiastical government; and, in the turbulent and revolutionary scenes which follow, will ascribe the preservation of the church, as a public body, to this patronage of the civil powers. And they may refer with truth to the precedents of ancient times, when God stirred up the princes of his people, not only to defend them from their external enemies, but to reform and regulate, according to law, the abuses and irregularities which had crept into the sacred services of his temple, and existed among his priests and Levites.

The immediate effect of the imperial patronage was highly conducive to the prosperity and enlargement of the Christian church; and we are not surprised that the Christians of those days saw, in the triumphs of the cross under Constantine, in their sudden deliverance from the most abject depression to a state of peace and prosperity, and in the prostration of all the powers of pagan darkness, which had so long governed the



world; the fulfilment of the prophecy of the Sixth Seal, in the Revelation, chap. vi. 12, &c., and of the prophetic symbol, Rev. xii. 7, where Michael and his angels fight; — “and the dragon and his angels fight and prevail not; neither is their place found any more in the heavens.”

Those who lived to see the consequences of this revolution, and knew the nature of the real triumphs of the cross, would, it is true, receive a disappointment similar to that of the Jews who returned from the captivity of Babylon to rebuild the sacred city and temple. There is, however, still reason to believe, that this establishment of the religion of Christ, by Constantine, after he had triumphed over the protectors of paganism, was, indeed, in the view of the Spirit of prophecy, in the passages referred to; but that this fulfilment was only typical of a greater change to come to pass hereafter, to which the language of the prediction, in its full amount, properly belongs<sup>1</sup>.

## SECT. II.

WE shall now consider the little that is left us of the internal affairs of the church at this time. Before the persecution had altogether ceased, a shameful scene was disclosed in the principal church of Africa, from which originated a new sect of Christians, called the Donatists. Cæcilian had been regularly chosen bishop of Carthage, according to the received custom of the times; but a party had been formed in opposition to this appointment, at the head of which was one Donatus, a schismatic before this time, and Lucilla, a rich lady, long too great to submit to the discipline of the religion she professed. The party had sufficient interest to assemble seventy bishops of Carthage, in order to depose Cæcilian. Without being able to allege any lawful impediment, and in direct opposition to the will of the people, they elected a servant of the factious lady, who had divided large sums of money among them<sup>2</sup>. This affords us a sad view of the corruption of the Christian body, before it could be spoiled by the patronage of princes and emperors; and leaves a strong impression on the mind, that the influence of private authority or riches, with the domineering of party spirit, had been more injurious to the welfare of the Christians of these days, than even that inter-

<sup>1</sup> See “The Second Advent of Christ,” by the Author of this History.

<sup>2</sup> Mithner and Fleury.

ference in their affairs, which Constantine and his successors took upon themselves.

The emperor, to remove this scandal from the religion which he had so lately begun to favour, directed that Cæcilian, with ten bishops of each party, should appear before a synod at Rome, to be held by Miltiades, the bishop of that see. Cæcilian was confirmed in his government, but the Donatists long continued, at least many of them, a disgrace to the Christian name.

But a heresy began, at this time, to disturb the unity of the church, which was of far more important and extensive consequences. It did not originate in any dispute about local interests or partialities, or the externals of church discipline, but was aimed at a vital principle of revealed religion. And whatever charity may believe and hope of many sects, who, though they violated the external unity of the church, still maintained all the essential doctrines of the faith, we cannot now hesitate to say, without respect to character or actions, there were men "privily bringing in damnable doctrines, even denying the Lord that bought them."

The heresy which these reflections concern, was Arianism, so called from Arius, a presbyter of Alexandria. The scheme of doctrine on which it was founded, denied the godhead of the Redeemer. If it exalted him far above all other creatures, yet it affirmed him to be only a created being; if it left him the title of God, it represented him as neither co-equal, nor co-essential, nor co-eternal with the Deity.

This doctrine was not indeed new in the annals of the church. As we have seen, all the ancient Gnostic heretics maintained that Christ, the Son of God, was something less than God; and, in a subsequent age, there had appeared those who taught that he was a mere man, or a deified man. But all these heretics had made little impression; the voice of the universal church was raised against them; and in no respect does the primitive church appear, upon the page of history, more "the ground and pillar of the truth," than in supporting the faith once delivered to the saints respecting the person of Christ. We may truly say of her, in her greatest declension, that she "could not bear" any doctrine that seemed to deny the true deity of the Son of God. But at the time when Arianism arose, if the pestilence was not of itself stronger, the predisposing causes in the body of the church to receive the infection, were far greater; insomuch that the plague, which at first spread

over Alexandria and Egypt, notwithstanding the precautions taken by the sound party of the church, threatened, at one time, her entire extinction.

This certainly affords an additional proof, that the Christianity of these times was more in form than in substance, in regard to a great multitude of its professors; because all the doctrines of the covenant of grace, as spiritually taught by the Holy Ghost to the quickened sinner, are essentially and inseparably connected with the doctrine of the Saviour's divinity. The spiritual Christian is in no danger of listening to doctrines which, allowedly, lessen the dignity of his Redeemer. The philosophical school of Alexandria, Origen and his disciples, have been charged with paving the way for Arianism; and probably with truth: not more, however, by their philosophical mode of teaching the doctrine of the Trinity, than by their undermining the doctrine of original sin and of grace; so that, for all practical purposes as "the medicine of life," they rendered a correct knowledge of the Redeemer's person of less importance, and more a matter of speculation, and an object for the inquiry of learned leisure.

In their philosophical disquisitions respecting the subordination of the person of the Son to the person of the Father, some of them certainly held a language that savoured of some inequality; but the Platonists, who were orthodox, would have denied it in any thing except what related to a *personal* difference. With respect to all essential properties, they maintained, not only that the Godhead in the Three Persons was all one, but that the whole Three Persons are co-eternal together and co-equal; so that, if the ancient tradition concerning the Godhead, preserved in the school of Plato, had stood its ground, Arianism, at least, could never have raised its head<sup>1</sup>.

Arius had many followers, in particular Eusebius, bishop of Nicomedia, who still patronised the heretic, though he had been deposed from the priesthood by his own bishop, in a synod which he had assembled for that purpose. Great and very serious dissensions arose in many places, to the sad exposure of the want of all religion in both parties, as Eusebius the historian expresses it: "Bishops were opposed to bishops; the people tumultuously killing one another, like a swarm of gnats fighting in the air<sup>2</sup>." The emperor was much grieved at

<sup>1</sup> See Bishop Horsley's Letters to Dr. Priestley.

<sup>2</sup> Vita Const.

hearing these scandalous divisions; and whether he really thought so, or was misinformed respecting the nature of the controversy, he considered it as a trifling question, not sufficient to warrant the breach of unity on either side. When he was better informed of the nature of the dispute, or, at least, of the importance which was attached to it by the faithful, he saw it right to summon a general council of bishops from all parts of the world; and accordingly, upwards of three hundred prelates, besides a multitude of the inferior orders, assembled at Nice, or Nicæa<sup>1</sup>, in Bithynia. The chief person who, in this famous council, appeared on the side of the Arians, was the bishop of Nicomedia, before-named; on the other side is mentioned the since celebrated Athanasius, then a deacon of the church of Alexandria, who, by the able support which he gave to his bishop on this occasion, laid the foundation of his own future fame. The emperor sat as moderator in this venerable assembly, many of whose members bore, in their mutilated persons, the evidences of their faithfulness in the late persecution<sup>2</sup>. Of the three hundred and eighteen bishops who had assembled, five only were found to side with Arius. The Arians themselves claim, out of the whole number of persons present, no more than twenty-two<sup>3</sup>; a sufficient testimony of the orthodoxy of that generation on the article of the Saviour's divinity. This great majority determined the emperor, who, it is plain, had been previously deceived by the Arians, at least as to the harmlessness of their opinions. Eusebius of Nicomedia, their patron, it should be observed, was bishop of the city, where he occasionally resided. Eusebius the historian, though no Arian, was one of those Platonists who had inculcated a lower conception of the eternal godhead of the Son, and leaned too much towards the Arian party. Hosius, bishop of Corduba, in Spain, was another whom the emperor particularly respected, and had already employed as his agent in this business: his soundness in the ancient faith was well known; and, as his opinion was that of a vast majority, Constantine committed to him the drawing up of the decrees of the council, which were to be subscribed as the faith of the catholic church.

All the great churches, it appears, had their symbols or creeds, short confessions of faith for the use of those who were admitted to baptism, and other ordinances of the church. These creeds contained the same fundamentals, but they

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 325.<sup>2</sup> Theodoret.<sup>3</sup> See Milner.

were couched in different language, influenced very much by the circumstances of the respective churches ; having been framed to supply an explicit test against the existing schemes of false doctrines with which their faith had been tried. The creed of the church of Rome was nearly that which now goes by the name of " the Apostles' Creed." It was certainly very ancient, nor had that part of the world been as yet much perplexed with the more subtle heresies of the East and of Alexandria. Its declaration concerning God and his Son, — " I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth ; and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord," — was sufficient to attest the ancient faith ; because, in the times of the apostles and their immediate successors, the Gnostic sects, who denied the proper Godhead of the Son, — though they held him to be more than human, — denied that the Father was the Creator of the world. They taught that Christ was only one of many emanations from the Deity ; so that to confess the Scripture doctrine concerning " the only Son of the Almighty Father," and that he was " conceived of the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary," &c. was a sufficient test of a right faith.

But in other churches, in the East especially, as new errors arose, a more full and explicit language had been adopted to guard against the new perversions of the truth. The bishop of Rome, Silvester, on account of his extreme old age, was not present at the Nicean council. Indeed, the creed offered to its consideration appeared better adapted to meet the present question, than the Roman. It was that used in the church of Caesarea, and presented by their bishop Eusebius, the historian. That part alone was the object of consideration, which treated of the Son of God ; it is given by Eusebius as follows : " We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible, and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God, God of God, Light of Light, Life of Life, the only-begotten Son, the first begotten of all creatures, begotten of God the Father before all worlds, by whom all things were made," &c. " This faith," he says, " we received of the bishops our predecessors, both when we were catechised, as also when we were signed with the seal of baptism : " — " this we believed being priest " — " this we preached being bishop."

It was, however, well known to the fathers of the synod, that the Arians and Semi-Arians, by their invention of a secondary Godhead, created or begotten by the Supreme Being,

could easily accommodate the language of the Creed to their own scheme of doctrine. The council, therefore, mainly insisted upon the addition of the clause, “of one substance with the Father.” Eusebius hesitated at receiving the clause, though he admitted that it was to be found in many ancient bishops and writers. In truth, as the phrase—“of one substance”—was then understood, it impugned his own opinions, as well as those of the Arians,—if, as is represented, he held a distinction of essence between the self-existing Jehovah and his everlasting Son, even as to his superior nature by which he was God. The clauses—“very God of very God<sup>1</sup>, begotten, not made,” were also put into the form of faith signed by the council. An anathema was pronounced against the following doctrines—“that there was a time when the Son of God was not,” or “that he did not exist before he was made; because he was made out of nothing, or of another substance or essence.”

The doctrines of Arius were now denounced by the emperor as damnable; his books were ordered, on pain of death, to be delivered up and burnt, and himself was banished to Illyricum. The bishops of the party were deposed from their sees, and sent into exile; but all of them, except two, recanted and were restored,—evidently not in sincerity; for, by the artifice of altering, in the Greek language, a single letter in the expression of “one substance,” they rendered it—“of a like substance.” They appear to have had many favourers among the great, in particular, Constantia, a favourite sister of the emperor; and, by various means and artful contrivances, they managed to stand their ground for a time, and at length obtained the ascendant. The council of Nice, however, though it did not immediately answer the purpose of its assembling, providentially afforded that complete testimony to the ancient faith, respecting the true and supreme Godhead of the Redeemer, which recalled at length the universal church to the acknowledgment of the truth, and to an entire acquiescence in its decrees, as the standard of orthodoxy on this point of doctrine.

A circumstance worth transcribing, is related by Socrates. Constantine, whose anxious wish was unanimity, had summoned

<sup>1</sup> The phrase, “very God of very God,” completely cut off the error of the Semi-Arians, or High Arians, as they are sometimes called. They would admit that Christ, as to his superior nature, was God of God, or God of very God; but that he was the true and very God, in the same sense as the Father was, they would deny.



to the council Acesius, bishop of the Cathari or Novatians. The emperor demanded whether he assented to the same faith which the rest subscribed. His answer was: "The council has concluded and decreed no new thing; for I have learned of old, that even from the beginning, and in the apostles' time, the same faith was retained." When Constantine demanded, why he separated from the church, he referred to the circumstances that had happened in the reign of Decius, and advanced an ancient canon, "that such as after baptism, through frailty of the flesh, had fallen into that kind of sin which Holy Scripture termed the sin unto death — which they applied to the lapsed in persecution — should not be partakers of the holy mysteries, but exhorted only unto repentance; and that they should wait for remission of sins to proceed, not of the priests, but of God himself, who, being of sufficient power, can remit it." The emperor is said to have replied, "Take a ladder, Acesius, and climb up to heaven alone."

This is a striking testimony to the doctrine of the Nicean fathers<sup>1</sup>. They settled also, by a decree, the time for celebrating Easter, still a matter of great contention. The mode then practised, of ordaining to the ministry, seems discoverable from a reference made to the eligibility of certain persons at Alexandria: it is said, "If he be found worthy," (by the clergy,) "and the people choose him, and the bishop consent and confirm his election." Some symptoms of a future corruption, the "forbidding to marry," is discoverable even in this synod; but the question, that the clergy, on pretence of leading a holier life, should repudiate their wives, was strongly reprehended<sup>2</sup>. What will strike us more is, that the practice of usury, or taking interest, is forbidden to the clergy, and their translation from one city to another. The strictness of discipline, however, was far from being wholly relaxed; apostates who sought reconciliation with the church, were to continue three years among the auditory, and to prostrate themselves during seven years<sup>3</sup>. The canons and determinations of the bishops, in their public consistories, were confirmed by imperial authority<sup>4</sup>. Vows of virginity were now greatly esteemed. Constantine, says his biographer, greatly respected the virgins who had taken on them

<sup>1</sup> From a perusal of the work of Novatian on the Trinity, I am led to infer that Acesius, and the Cathari of this age, were sounder in this article of the faith, than the founder of their sect. His scheme, I conceive, would be termed High Arianism.

<sup>2</sup> Socrates.

<sup>3</sup> Fleury.

<sup>4</sup> Vita Const.



their vows ; he believed that the Spirit of God dwelt in their minds.

The emperor was at this time employed in erecting a new metropolis for his empire ; a measure replete with important consequences to the future situation of the church and of the Roman world. The ancient Byzantium, most beautifully and conveniently situated on the Bosphorus, was rebuilt and enlarged, Christian churches being substituted for heathen temples. This city, called Constantinople, after his own name, became the residence of the emperor's government ; it withdrew from the ancient capital great numbers of her principal inhabitants, and dismantled her of all her grandeur and dominion ; so that Rome seemed to become, in fact, little more than a provincial town. She was still, however, supported by the greatness of her name ; and this removal of the imperial residence became, in after ages, one great cause of the exaltation of the Roman bishop beyond all his fellows.

Constantine continued to erect churches in various parts of his dominions, especially in the holy city of Jerusalem, which now was becoming an object of fond and superstitious reverence to the Christian world. In this he was much aided by the devotion of his mother Helena. Visions and revelations were now in fashion ; but this is no proof that no true vision or revelation had brought Constantine to patronise the faith his predecessors had destroyed, for the lying spirit, and the superstitious fancy of man, often mimic the work of God in its dispensations which are actually going on. Helena, called as she supposed by a vision, proceeded to Jerusalem, which she found “ an heap of stones<sup>1</sup>.” A temple of Venus occupied the reputed spot of the sepulchre of Christ. The attendants of Helena, in digging beneath its foundations, contrived to find three crosses, with the tablet on which Pilate had written “ Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews.” But a great doubt perplexed the empress, which of the three crosses was that on which our Lord had been crucified. Eusebius, bishop of Jerusalem, devised an expedient, which we should have thought had been reserved for the ingenuity of the relic-finders in subsequent ages. He produced a woman who was affected with a grievous disease ; the crosses were severally laid upon her, the first two without effect ; the third performed the miracle of her cure. This, of course, was the true cross. A magnificent church was erected over the sepulchre ;

<sup>1</sup> Socrates.

half of the cross was placed in a silver chest, and half of the precious relic was sent as a present to the emperor, with the nails that had fastened the body of the Saviour; for they also were found in the sepulchre. The relics were received as a sacred palladium, securing the safety of the city and of the emperor's person. Nothing, indeed, is said of worshipping them; but we plainly perceive how rapidly superstition was growing in the church.

Helena built another church at Bethlehem, and is much celebrated for her devotions and charities: it is particularly said that she would invite the dedicated virgins to her table, and wait upon them herself. She died at the age of fourscore. That her piety was not sincere, it is not for man to judge; but who can forbear lamenting that she met with such miserable and superstitious guides in religion? The contemporary historians do not scruple, indeed, to assert, that the religion of many was a designing hypocrisy, and that the emperor too easily suffered himself to be imposed upon<sup>1</sup>. They also plainly mark the artifice of the devil, in sowing discord among the professors of the Christian faith, in this too happy season of the church's prosperity<sup>2</sup>. Christianity was, however, much extended, not only within the bounds of the empire, but also among the barbarians of the north, over whom Constantine had been victorious. In Iberia also, and in middle India, the Gospel was introduced. The inhabitants of the former are described as a nation bordering on the Euxine sea; but, whether by the latter are meant the people of Hindostan, or those of the south-east of Africa, is perhaps uncertain. In both these cases, the conversion of the natives is ascribed to the residence of Christian captives amongst them. Miracles are related; with what truth, as it is unimportant for us to know, so is it difficult for us to establish from the credulous historians of the times. To how late a period instances of true miracles, wrought in particular circumstances by the power of God, to advance the knowledge of his religion, were to be found in the history of his people, it is impossible to determine. But the multitude of lying wonders which now began to be imposed on a superstitious and most credulous age, and the many foolish and erroneous purposes for which these miracles are asserted to have been performed, entirely destroy all the credibility of their relaters in the view of posterity.

Anthony, the monk, who retired to the deserts of Egypt,

<sup>1</sup> Euseb. Vit. Const.

<sup>2</sup> Socrates.

and set the first, or, at least, the most famous example of the anchorite superstition, and whose fabulous combats with the devil, and wonderful miracles, are equal to any thing found in more modern times, was one of the heroes of the day. "The age of Constantine was productive," says Socrates, "of great and extraordinary men; but among the good wheat, tares are accustomed to grow." He particularly refers to the Manichean heretics, who originated, a little before this time, with Manes. This heretic at first appeared in Egypt, where he propagated his opinions, which formed a sect that endured for many ages. The ancient doctrine of the Gnostics, of the two independent principles of good and evil, was their fundamental principle; to which they added the doctrine of the Pythagoreans, concerning the transmigration of souls,—if, indeed, all was not derived from the same source, the ancient eastern philosophy.

The church of Christ, however, was most of all concerned, in these times, with the progress of Arianism, which threatened speedily to root out the knowledge of the truth, or to subject its faithful professors to all the horrors of a pagan persecution.

Athanasius, the great champion for the ancient faith, was, soon after the council of Nice, elected to the bishopric of Alexandria; but Eusebius of Nicomedia, who, with his friends, had outwardly conformed to the faith, was advancing himself much in the emperor's favour, and used every endeavour to undermine the truth, and to create a personal opposition to Athanasius and its real supporters. The clause, "of one substance with the Father," to which they had subscribed, seemed to touch to the quick the unsoundness not only of the Arians themselves, but of the new Platonisers, who thought with Eusebius the historian, that though Christ was everlasting God, he was not Jehovah. They charged the orthodox with taking away the substance or essence of the Son of God, and introducing the doctrine of Montanus and Sabellius; but this was very far from being their meaning, for they clearly maintained, that the mysterious existence of the Divine Being, as revealed in Scripture, was, that there are three Divine Persons, each of himself acknowledged to be the Almighty, God, and Jehovah. But, though they confounded not the persons, they divided not the substance or essence. They asserted that the Godhead of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, was all one—the glory equal, and the majesty co-eternal. The orthodox, on their side, advanced a unanswerable objection against the statement of their opponents, that, on their scheme, if, as they pretended;

Christ was truly God, there must be two Gods, and thus they paved the way for the plurality of the pagans. Eusebius the historian and his followers, it is plain, favoured the Arians far more than the orthodox — a very common case with those who go half way towards any heterodox opinion. These, however, had the emperor's ear, and probably his conscience too. The equivocal subscription of Arius and his party was received, and some orthodox bishops were condemned for Sabellianism; in particular, Enotathius, bishop of Antioch, accused, indeed, of other crimes. "But the manner of the bishops was," says Socrates, who professes himself unable to tell the difference between the orthodox and Eusebius, "to accuse them whom they depose, and denounce them for wicked persons, and at the same time to conceal their particular faults<sup>1</sup>." "And thus," Mr. Milner remarks, "while the truth was supported in form, its friends, by a variety of artifices, were persecuted, and its enemies triumphed — a case not uncommon in our own time! Men void of principle had every secular advantage, while those who feared God chose rather to suffer than to sin."

But the chief object of resentment to the conforming Arians, with Eusebius of Nicomedia at their head, was Athanasius. Their first attempt was to get Arius restored to his priesthood at Alexandria, by the order of the emperor, artfully persuading him that Arius had been unjustly condemned, and was willing to subscribe to the Nicene faith. Arius was sent for, and subscribed a paper which, at least, satisfied the emperor that he agreed to the common faith, and he commanded his restoration to his priesthood. This, as was probably designed, brought trouble on Athanasius, who refused to receive him; writing back to the emperor, that it was unlawful to restore to his former dignity in the church, one who had once made shipwreck of his faith, and had been anathematised by the church. This so offended the emperor, that he threatened to depose him by his own imperial authority. The Arian bishops saw their time, and raised various accusations against the bishop of Alexandria, which, unhappily for them, he was able to refute to their shame and confusion, in the presence of all.

Athanasius had been sent for to the emperor, and without submission to his unlawful order, had been dismissed with favour. The conforming Arians, however, at length prevailed; and Athanasius, under the pretence that he had threatened to

<sup>1</sup> Lib. i. cap. 20.

prevent the exportation of corn from Alexandria, was banished into France. The return of Arius to that city excited a great uproar; the people being displeased no less at his conduct than at the banishment of their bishop. Arius was summoned to Constantinople, to give an account of his share in these tumults. His arrival there created great divisions. Alexander, the bishop, intimated his intention to refuse him the communion, for which he was threatened with the vengeance of Eusebius of Nicomedia, now all-powerful at court. Arius, after the emperor had made him again subscribe and swear to the Nicean confession, ordered Alexander to admit him; but while he and his party were proceeding with great parade to put the bishop's constancy to the proof, he was struck with the hand of death, in a manner which made a general impression that it was the judgment of Heaven.

### SECT. III.

Constantine was taken ill at Constantinople in the following year<sup>1</sup>. He proceeded at first to the baths of Helenopolis; but finding himself growing worse, having first confessed his sins in the martyrs' church of that place, and received absolution by imposition of hands, he proceeded as far as the suburbs of Nicomedia, where he requested to be baptised, saying, it had been his intention to be baptised in the river Jordan. Eusebius the historian remarks, on his baptism: "He was the first emperor who was regenerated by the new birth of baptism, and was signed with the sign of the cross." He describes the joy and thankfulness of the emperor: we may hope it was true and spiritual, and that he did receive, with "the outward sign, the fulness of grace;" but, both his deferring his baptism, and the manner in which the historian describes it, mark the superstition of the times, in looking to the outward and visible sign, as acting by some virtue inherent in itself, and, according to their erroneous views, a virtue that might afterwards be impaired; so that, of course, it were good policy to defer the sacrament to the latest period of life. It is not for us to judge that the emperor did not receive it at last with true penitence and a lively faith; for though the bishops and priests with whom he was surrounded, were of that persuasion that himself had pronounced damnable, yet we should remember that, by

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 337.

their professions and subscriptions, they had passed themselves upon him as holding the true faith. But the general character of the emperor had not improved with his years.

Constantine left his dominions among his three sons, Constantine, Constantius, and Constans. The first was already possessed of the dominion of Spain and Gaul, and the last of Italy and Africa. Constantius ascended his father's throne at Constantinople. The eldest brother sent back Athanasius to Alexandria, declaring that he only fulfilled the intentions of his late father. This prince was killed in a contest with his brother Constans, not long after.

Constantius, a weak man, fell entirely into the hands of the Arians, who had first seduced to their party many of the domestics and officers of the royal household, and even the empress herself. Their cause was also much promoted by the death of the bishop of Constantinople, who, during his lifetime, had prevented the spread of heresy in the city. Great dissensions now arose; the Arian party would have chosen Macedonius, but the multitude, still favourable to orthodoxy, elected Paulus, a man pointed out by the recommendation of their late bishop. Their choice displeased Constantius; and for the first time we behold, on the part of the civil government, a violation of the church's right to choose its own bishops. The emperor, through the medium of a synod of Arian bishops, and in violation of the canon that forbid the translation of bishops, appointed Eusebius of Nicomedia in his place. This great champion of the Arian heresy, now installed in the see of the metropolis of the East, used every effort to alter the profession of the Catholic faith agreed upon at Nice, and to crush Athanasius. For this purpose, he procured a council to be summoned in the emperor's presence, at Antioch. Ninety bishops assembled; but some, knowing the purpose for which the council was called, declined attendance. Among others, Julius, bishop of Rome, neither came nor sent his delegates; without whose consent, the historian tells us, no institution ought by canon to be imposed upon the church. This shews that the influence of that see had not been declining in the Christian world, though we seem for some time to have lost sight of it, and have seen a new rival to its bishop erected in the bishop of the imperial residence.

Athanasius was, of course, condemned in this synod. His see was first offered to a person of the name of Eusebius; but he declined it, because of the great love which the people had to



their bishop. A person of the name of Gregory was then appointed. In this synod a confession of faith was drawn up, with great subtlety, which, while it pretended to be the ancient faith, expressed no more than what an Arian would subscribe to. With Gregory, who was to supersede Athanasius, an order was sent, for the civil power to put him by force into possession; and scenes of tumult and of violence, like those of a pagan persecution, ensued.

When the church where Athanasius was officiating was attacked by the military, having ordered his deacon to read the collects to the people, and to sing a psalm, he escaped unnoticed among the multitude, who went out in a body from the church. He departed, and found an asylum at Rome. Eusebius, with the most artful policy, had written to Julius, to judge and pronounce the definitive sentence on Athanasius; but he lived not to know the result, having died immediately after the council. Great tumults again took place at Constantinople. The people again brought forth Paulus, the bishop of their choice; and the Arian party produced Macedonius in opposition to him. The emperor, being at Antioch, sent an order to one of his officers to drive Paulus from the city. The officer was resisted, and finally murdered by the populace. This brought Constantius in haste, who severely punished the city, by depriving it of the annual donation of corn. Gregory, who had lately been imposed upon Alexandria, was translated to Constantinople, and George of Cappadocia, another Arian, was placed in his room. All the deposed bishops had recourse to Rome. Julius, in a council of the western or Italian bishops, restored them to their sees, and the people seem to have received them. The eastern bishops, however, assembled at Antioch, to protest against the right of Julius to interfere; and, having the emperor on their side, Athanasius and Paulus were again expelled with great military violence. Socrates speaks of three thousand one hundred and fifty persons having been killed by the soldiers, or crushed to death, at the forcible introduction of the Arian bishop at Constantinople; and scenes of a similar nature took place at Alexandria.

Athanasius and Paulus again met at Rome, and applied to the Western emperor, who interposed with his brother on their behalf. At length, a general council was called, at the requisition of both emperors, to meet at Sardica, in Illyria<sup>1</sup>. Three

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 347.



hundred bishops assembled from the West, at the head of whom was Hosius, who had drawn up the confession of faith in the council of Nice. The eastern bishops avoided attendance; not more than seventy assembled, and they afterwards withdrew: so that the leading bishops of the East and West appeared to divide on the great question of the Redeemer's Godhead.

In this council decrees were passed, that but too clearly shew the state of the times. "The translation of bishops from one see to another is pronounced a pernicious custom, that must be rooted out.—None," it is remarked, "have been found to pass from a greater to a less; therefore they are induced by avarice and ambition." They enjoin "the residence of bishops," and forbid "their journeys to court." A time is limited for the residence of one bishop in the diocese of another, in order "that they may not supplant each other."

The council of Sardica reversed the sentences which had been passed on Athanasius and the other bishops; and Constans interested himself so greatly on their behalf, that when his brother refused to receive them, he threatened him with war. This had the desired effect on Constantius; the bishops were for the present reinstated in their sees. Constantius demanded of Athanasius, that one of the churches of Alexandria should be left in the hands of the Arians; and he, on his part, proposed that a similar indulgence should be granted to the orthodox, in the cities of the Arian bishops: at this, however, they demurred. Within four years after the council of Sardica, Constans fell in a rebellion in the West, and Constantius became sole emperor<sup>1</sup>. The persecution was now renewed against the orthodox. Paulus was again deposed, loaded with irons, and murdered; and Macedonius, with an armed force, took possession of his see. Athanasius was ordered to be executed, wherever he might be seized. On the knowledge of this, he again fled for his life. In Constantinople, and throughout the East, where the Arians abounded, a persecution was commenced against all who refused to renounce the Nicæan faith; this differed nothing in its cruelty and instruments of torture and death, from the persecutions of the pagans. Many were exposed to the severest treatment, and suffered martyrdom at Alexandria, through the savage cruelty of George, the Arian bishop; and the Novatians, who had three places of worship in Constantinople, from their known

<sup>1</sup> A. D. 351.

attachment to the ancient faith, had their full share in this Arian persecution. But the cities of Greece, Illyricum, and the West, were still unanimous for the ancient faith, and, notwithstanding the change of the imperial policy, enjoyed peace.

The affairs of the empire had, however, brought Constantius into the West, and he summoned a council of bishops at Milan<sup>1</sup>, in order to impose on them his Arian creed. Many were found faithful, and, after enduring cruel torments, were driven into banishment. Liberius, the Roman bishop, was banished into Thrace; and Hosius of Corduba, now more than a hundred years old, and long threatened to no purpose, was at length overcome with scourges and tortures. Liberius also, to the great scandal of the faithful, was brought, after two years' banishment, to subscribe to the Arian faith, and to condemn Athanasius. So complete was the triumph of Arianism, that a proverb arose, "All the world against Athanasius, and Athanasius against all the world."

As for Athanasius, he had concealed himself among the monks in the deserts of Egypt, who, notwithstanding their superstitions, were all zealous defenders of the ancient faith, and much attached to Athanasius, as the friend of their founder Anthony, who had lately died at the age of a hundred and five years. The life of this man has been written by Athanasius.

Constantius died not long after these transactions, and was succeeded by Julian<sup>2</sup>, a descendant of a brother of the first Constantine. Constantius had appointed him Cæsar, and committed the war in Gaul to his management: the knowledge of his rebellion, and the apprehension of a civil war, had shortened the days of the late emperor. Julian, though, for disguise, he had even been a reader in the church of Constantinople, was known to have zealously embraced the ancient pagan theology. His first measures, however, were rather favourable to the orthodox Christians, through policy, and from his hatred of the ruling party, the Arians, whom Constantine had favoured. At the same time that he repealed the law against idolatry, he recalled the orthodox bishops from exile, and restored their confiscated property. It soon appeared, however, that the new emperor had laid a systematic plan for the re-establishment of the old religion, and that nothing less than the extirpation of the Christian name, would satisfy his philosophical ambition. But the career permitted to Julian was so short, that all his

<sup>1</sup> A. D. 355.

<sup>2</sup> A. D. 361.

schemes proved abortive; and the injury which he did the church, hardly deserves to be remembered among those greater wrongs which she received from her own divisions and corruptions, and from the public calamities of subsequent ages.

Athanasius had not at first ventured to return from his retreat, for fear of the Arian bishop George; but the latter, with many professed Christians, had now fallen a victim to the pagans, in a tumult which their zeal to expose some secrets of the ancient pagan superstition had excited. After this event, Athanasius made his appearance, and was received with great affection by his people: the Arians, no longer supported by the civil power, were expelled from the churches, and elected a bishop of their own. The first care of Athanasius, was to assemble a council at Alexandria, in order to re-establish the standard of the ancient faith which had been assaulted, not only by the Sabellians, who denied a distinction of persons in the Godhead, and by Arius, who denied the divine essence or substance to the Son, but also by two more recent introducers of false doctrine, Macedonius, who, without calling in question the deity of the Son, denied the divinity of the Holy Ghost, and Apollinarius, who had taught that the Son of God had not taken upon him the whole nature of man, but merely the human body. Against all these errors the true faith was asserted<sup>1</sup>.

Athanasius was not long permitted to enjoy his liberty; he was accused to the emperor of having subverted all Alexandria, so that he was again compelled to conceal himself. On his departure, addressing his friends, he said, "Let us go aside for a season: this is but a little cloud, and will soon pass away." So indeed it proved; for, in a few months, Julian perished in the Persian war, after a reign of little more than a year and a half, at a time when, with great political sagacity, he was fostering many a plan for the suppression of the Christian faith. Julian did not openly and avowedly persecute, because he was aware that there were multitudes who were ready to go to prison and to death for their religion; but he resolved to harass the Christians by every sort of oppression, under any colourable pretence. A heavy taxation was imposed for not sacrificing; Christians were debarred from the schools of learning; and idolatry was made the test of loyalty in the army, in which we find, among those who refused to deny their Saviour,

<sup>1</sup> Socrates.

three persons who afterwards ascended the throne, Jovian, Valentinian, and Valens. When the Christians complained of the cruelties of the governors, who had exceeded the severity of his instructions, they found no redress from Julian, but the taunt, "When you suffer, take it patiently; for so your God commanded you." One of his schemes had been to restore the temple of the Jews, in order to falsify the Scripture prophecies; but here perhaps the most incredulous must admit, on the weight of historic evidence, a visible interference of Divine Providence. "He had committed the conduct of the affair to Alypius of Antioch, who set himself to the vigorous execution of his charge, and was assisted by the governor of the province; but horrible balls of fire breaking out near the foundations, with repeated attacks, rendered the place inaccessible to the scorched workmen from time to time; and the element resolutely driving them to a distance, the enterprise was dropped<sup>1</sup>. Nay, so far from the refutation of prophecy was the event of this impious attempt, that the Christians saw in it the full completion of the Redeemer's prediction concerning the Temple, 'Not one stone shall be left upon another:' for, till this event, the old foundation of the Temple was yet remaining, but now all was torn up and thrown to the ground<sup>2</sup>."

On the death of Julian<sup>3</sup>, Jovian, one of those officers who had so nobly confessed the faith of Christ, but who, on account of his merits, had still been employed by Julian, was saluted emperor by the army. He declined the proffered crown, and exclaimed aloud, "I am a Christian, and cannot command idolaters." "You command Christians," was the answer; which certainly bespeaks, in the army, either a great indifference about religion, or a secret preference for Christianity, which the measures of the late emperor had suppressed, but had not extinguished. As soon as Jovian had relieved his army from its perilous situation, by such a treaty as circumstances would permit, he withdrew from Persia, and was met by the bishops of both parties, each anxious to secure the emperor. He had always been faithful to the orthodox faith,

<sup>1</sup> This is the account of Ammianus Marcellinus, "a writer of unquestionable credibility, and, at least, no friend to the Gospel. The Christian evidences for the fact are, Gregory Nazianzen, Ambrose, and Chrysostom, who lived in the same time; the three historians, Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret, who lived in the next age. To these may be added, Philostorgius the Arian, and the testimony of Jewish Rabbies. See Warburton's Julian, p. 98." — MILNER.

<sup>2</sup> Socrates, lib. iii. cap. 17.

<sup>3</sup> A.D. 363.

and declared openly his resolution to encourage that alone; and he immediately sent letters to Athanasius, who was thus once more openly established in the government of his church. Jovian also restored the bishops who had been banished by Constantius, and had not returned under Julian. Paganism every where retired from public view, and great numbers threw aside the appropriate garb of the philosopher. The emperor did not, however, revive the severe laws against public sacrifices; but, while he gave all his influence towards the encouragement of true religion, he granted universal toleration. The sectarians were not content with this, but practised their arts even among the domestics of the palace; some of them, however, now thought fit to subscribe to the Nicean faith. The conduct of Jovian extorted the praises of a heathen philosopher, "because, at the same time that he granted liberty of conscience to all, he stopped the mouths of flatterers and sycophants, ebbing and flowing like the tide, who worship not the King of heaven, but the earthly crown and sceptre<sup>1</sup>."

A reign which had begun with so much promise of good, lasted but seven months; so inscrutable are the ways of Providence! Jovian was succeeded by Valentinian, who associated his brother Valens in the empire. Valentinian was sound in the faith, but Valens proved a zealous Arian. The former trod in the steps of Jovian, and kept inviolate the principle of toleration; but the latter, where his power extended, supported his cause by the cruel persecution of the orthodox.

Athanasius of Alexandria was, at this time, regarded as the head of those who professed the ancient faith; with whom we may mention Cyril, bishop of Jerusalem. Liberius, bishop of Rome, had also returned to the same profession. At Constantinople, Eudoxius the bishop was an Arian. The orthodox had but one small chapel in that city. Lucius, whom the Arians of Alexandria had chosen bishop in opposition to Athanasius, was considered as the head of their party. Antioch was in the possession of an Arian bishop; and those who held the Nicean faith in that city, were divided into two parties, over one of which Paulinus presided, and Meletius over the other. The sect of the Macedonians also, who denied the divinity of the Holy Ghost, had their places of worship in every city<sup>2</sup>.

Valentinian's presence was required in the West, while his

<sup>1</sup> Themistius, in *Secra'es*.

<sup>2</sup> Socrates.

Arian brother was left in full power in the East. At Antioch, to which place he proceeded, though he spared Paulinus, one of the orthodox bishops, out of respect, it is said, for his character, he banished Meletius, and with great severity exacted submission to the Arian bishop. Many, it was reported, were thrown into the river Orontes. The rebellion of Procopius, who, in his absence, got possession of Constantinople, for a short time averted the persecutor's arm; but no sooner was this revolt subdued, than he revenged the Arians on the Macedonians, who, in a council of their bishops, which he had permitted, had ventured, during the interruption of his power, to condemn the Arians. He banished all the orthodox Christians from Constantinople, and among them the Novatians, who still had a church in that city, under Agelius, who had been their bishop from the time of Constantine. Agelius is described as being a man extremely rigid and precise in his habits, who always went barefoot, and applied to himself the command, that he was to have but one coat. The favour of the emperor was, however, afterwards conciliated towards the Novatians, and the doors of their church were opened; but the Arians still molested them, because they loved and cherished those of the orthodox faith. Many priests and bishops were banished for refusing to communicate with the Arians<sup>1</sup>.

The bishops of the Macedonian party, who had been considered not only as unsound on the point of the divinity of the Spirit, but as Semi-Arians, at least, respecting the Godhead of the Son, now cleared themselves of the latter error, and sent their subscriptions to the Nicæan faith to Liberius and the western bishops, and were admitted by him into the communion of the orthodox. The bishop of Rome was not, perhaps, aware of their opinions respecting the Holy Ghost; and the error had not been provided against by the Nicæan council, as it was then unknown as distinct from Arianism, or some other heresy. We notice, in the letter of these Macedonian bishops, the title of "Lord" given to the Roman bishop: this seems peculiar, though not without precedent in the correspondence of Cyprian, as a general title of respect. The title of "Holiness" had long been applied to bishops, and probably was only intended to express their dedication or consecration to their high office: they wrote to—their lord and brother, and fellow-minister, Liberius. He calls them his fellow-bishops; but, what a little

<sup>1</sup> Socrates.



savours of after times, he adds, " which am the meanest of you all."

When the writ for his expulsion had arrived at Alexandria<sup>1</sup>, Athanasius, fearing a popular uproar in his favour, concealed himself, and is said to have lain hid four months in his father's sepulchre. But the state of the public mind in Alexandria was such, that the emperor was compelled to restore him, and he remained in possession of his government till his death, which happened six years afterwards.

At Constantinople, the orthodox Christians, who were very numerous among the lower orders, had ventured, on the death of the Arian bishop, to elect a bishop of the orthodox faith. This led to a cruel and violent persecution on the part of the Arians : eighty of the orthodox priests, who had been sent to implore the protection of the emperor against these violences, were put on board a vessel, which was then set on fire, and they all perished in the conflicting elements. This mode of execution was chosen by the imperial officer, as being the least likely to excite popular disturbance. Drowning in the waves of the sea, seems to have been a favourite punishment with this Arian persecutor, who, however, like his pagan predecessors, did not always abstain from more cruel tortures, in the deaths of his victims, and he every where found the Christians as ready to suffer as they had been in former times.

At Alexandria, on the death of Athanasius<sup>2</sup>, dreadful scenes of slaughter were disclosed. The orthodox, who were the greater part of the population, chose Peter in his room ; but the Arian bishops persuaded the emperor to support Lucius, an Arian ; Peter was seized and imprisoned, the rest of the clergy banished, and all the churches given to the Arians, though they were but few in number. Peter escaped to Damasus, bishop of Rome. Imprisonment, exile, and slaughter, supported the cause of Arianism throughout Egypt. This persecution reached even the poor monks of the Desert, who were known to be staunch defenders of the ancient faith ; their religious houses were overthrown, their constancy was tried in the wonted manner of persecutors, and all, at length, were driven into a remoter exile. But, though the monks were faithful on the great question which divided the professing world, they already cherished that system which afterwards spread the monastic institutions over the East and Europe. It was formed entirely with the view of

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 367.

<sup>2</sup> A.D. 372.



carrying more effectually into practice the precepts of that philosophy of the eclectic school of Alexandria, and of the ancient Gnostics, which have been noticed, in a former age, as the great source of corruption in the Christian church. The holiness at which they aimed, consisted in vows of celibacy, abstinence, and long fastings, with every species of austerity and self-mortification which that philosophy enjoined. Excessively ignorant and superstitious, they fancied themselves the perpetual antagonists of the evil spirit, and vaunted themselves as the workers of numerous miracles. One could boast, that for forty years his mind had not consented to sin, or lust, or anger; another, perhaps somewhat more honestly, when he heard the first verse of the thirty-eighth psalm read, "I will take heed to my ways, that I offend not with my tongue," refused to hear any more, but departed, saying, "This one verse is enough for me, if I learn it as I ought to do;" and, after nineteen years, he said he had scarce learned to fulfil that one line. Another, because his New Testament told him to sell what he had and to give to the poor, sold the book itself, the only one he possessed.

That a superior wisdom and true piety might reign in the breasts of some of these recluses, we ought not to take upon us to deny; but, in the whole of the system, nothing appears but a sad perversion of sacred truth. And that this should be admired and cherished by the great Athanasius and the Christians of those days, shews us, to how low a point real practical religion was reduced! Athanasius was himself of the eclectic school, and is to be admired chiefly for his defence of the doctrine of the Trinity.

At this time Dydimus, a blind, but very learned man of Alexandria, Basil, bishop of Cesarea in Cappadocia, and Gregory Nazianzen, are spoken of as able advocates for the truth, against the Arians. These were all of the same school; they magnified Origen as their great oracle, and encouraged the monastic discipline with the utmost zeal.

The frequency of popular tumults, at the elections of the bishops of the greater sees, in these ages, marks at once the great increase of professed Christians, and the great decay of Christian unity and piety. On the election of Damasus, of Rome<sup>1</sup>, the civil power was compelled to interfere, at the expense of many lives. The see of Rome was now become an object even of

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 366.

worldly ambition; so great were the alterations that time had introduced since the death of Peter and Paul. "When I consider," says the pagan philosopher Ammianus, "the magnificence and grandeur of Rome, I do not deny but that those who are ambitious of this dignity, ought to use all their endeavours to arrive at it; since they, by this means, procure a certain settlement, where they are enriched by the offerings of the ladies: they ride in chariots, richly clothed, and feast so splendidly, that their tables surpass even those of kings. They might be truly happy, if, contemning the splendour of Rome, they lived like some bishops of the provinces, who, by the plainness of their diet, their mean apparel, and the modesty of their looks, which are turned towards the ground, make themselves acceptable to the eternal God and his true worshippers."

It appears also, that the Luciferians<sup>1</sup>, the Novatians, and the Donatists, had each a bishop at this time at Rome; but these bishops were heads of small and obscure congregations, and did not withdraw much of the respect of mankind from the bishop of the general church<sup>2</sup>.

One of these contested elections at Milan, which threatened a dangerous tumult, gave to the church, at this time, in a very extraordinary way, one of her most eminent bishops and fathers.

Ambrose, a man of known religion and probity, was governor of Milan. The apprehension of dangerous consequences from a tumult, had brought him into the church, where he had with difficulty appeased the violence of the contending parties, when, on a sudden, the whole multitude cried out, with one voice, "Ambrose shall be the man." The exclamation is said to have originated with a child in the crowd, who cried out, "Ambrose is bishop<sup>3</sup>!" The bishops present received this unanimous voice of the people, as the voice of God; and, after some difficulty, with the concurrence of the emperor Valentinian, they at length persuaded Ambrose to accept the office, and he filled it for many years, to the great advantage of the church. By his labours, Arianism was expelled from Italy; but, though superior to most of his day, Ambrose must still be classed with the disciples of Origen and the Alexandrian school<sup>4</sup>.

Valentinian<sup>5</sup>, the favourer of the orthodox, and Valens, their cruel and determined persecutor, died within three years

<sup>1</sup> A sect much resembling the Novatians.

<sup>2</sup> Fleury.

<sup>3</sup> Socrates and Sozomen.

<sup>4</sup> Milner.

<sup>5</sup> A.D. 375.

of each other. The troubles in which the latter had found himself involved with the barbarians, by whose hands he at last fell, had, in his last days, afforded a respite to the persecuted. Peter had been restored to Alexandria, and the usurping Arian expelled from the city. Gratian, the eldest son of Valentinian, and Valentinian II. an infant, had been appointed to the succession. Gratian had embraced the true faith, and much strengthened the hands of Ambrose, at Milan; and in the East, he recalled from exile the bishops whom Valens had banished. His greatest gift, however, both to the church, which was torn with dissensions, and to the empire, now violently assaulted by the barbarians, was the appointment of Theodosius, a Spanish noble, to be his colleague in the East.

Theodosius took up his residence at Constantinople. The new emperor expelled the Arians from their churches, and, after an interval of forty years, Constantinople was again put into the hands of the clergy of the ancient faith. Without delay he summoned a general council<sup>1</sup>, and a hundred and fifty bishops assembled. With their concurrence, Nectarius, a man of noble birth, who held the office of prætor, was chosen bishop, as Gregory Nazianzen, who had been translated to the see, refused to continue therein. The council decreed, that the bishop of Constantinople should have precedence next after the bishop of Rome. Other bishops of the larger sees were advanced to the dignity of patriarchs of provinces, and the residence of bishops in their own churches was enforced. But that which has rendered this council most celebrated in the history of the church, is their adding to the Nicæan confession of faith, that clause respecting the Holy Ghost, which we now find in the creed. We are not by this to understand that the Deity of the Holy Ghost was now for the first time asserted; the doctrine is clearly stated in the more ancient creeds. The design of the council of Nice had not been to draw up a general creed, but only to express more fully the sense of the church on one article of it, the Deity of the Son, then denied by the Arians. The denial of the Godhead of the Spirit, by the Macedonians, now called for a more explicit avowal of the common faith on this article.

Theodosius laboured much, and with the best intentions, to produce unanimity in the profession of the Christian faith. He was not content merely to follow the better example of Jovian

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 381.

and Valentinian, and to encourage and foster the truth with all his power, but he granted, at the same time, liberty of conscience and toleration to all. He did not, indeed, imitate the cruelties of the Arian Valens; but his laws against the Arians were oppressive, and paganism in a manner expired under his severe edicts, for it was made a capital crime to sacrifice, or to attend the pagan rites. What he aimed at in the church, was not, however, so much to ensure uniformity in discipline, as to maintain the orthodox faith. In the long and scandalous quarrel at Antioch, concerning who should be bishop, he did not interfere; and not only he tolerated the Novatians, because they held the Nicean faith, but he shewed great favour to their bishops; and we must recollect that the conduct of the Arians and of the other sectaries had been very violent. A report of the emperor's death, indeed, after he had settled the church, encouraged them to excite a riot, in which they burned the residence of the bishop of Constantinople.

In the mean time, Ambrose had suffered much from the Arian court of Valentinian II., which resided at Milan. His stand against the invasion of the rights of his church was noble, and the spirit of true devotion and piety breathes in his language; but how marred with the growing superstition of the times! He could not consecrate a church, unless they found him some relics of martyrs. The journey of Theodosius into the West, at length reconciled Valentinian to his bishop, and he died in his communion.

The spirit with which Ambrose supported the ancient discipline of the church, appears in his conduct towards Theodosius himself. The bishop charged upon the conscience of the emperor, a cruel massacre of the people of Thessalonica, in a popular tumult, which had been executed by his orders, and he refused him admittance into the church of Milan. When a courtier endeavoured to intimidate him, the answer was: "I will hinder him from entering the vestibule, yet if he will play the king, I will offer him my throat." The emperor submitted to the public penance enjoined by the bishop; and, as hasty passion had been the cause of the massacre, he engaged for the future to suspend the execution of warrants, in capital offences, for thirty days.

The West also was disturbed by the Priscilians, an impious sect; but their persecution by some of the clergy, through the instrumentality of the civil power, much disgraced their cause. However, a faithful witness against these proceedings was found

in Martin, bishop of Tours. He blamed their being brought as criminals before the secular power, and called it "a new and unheard of evil:" he insisted that their expulsion from the church was all-sufficient for their punishment<sup>1</sup>.

Theodosius, after a reign of sixteen years, died at Milan<sup>2</sup>, having left the empire to his sons, Honorius and Arcadius. The former reigned in the West, the latter in the East. This proved to be a permanent division of the Roman dominions; and at this epocha we may close the history of the fourth century.



## CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH DURING THE CHIEF INROADS OF THE BARBARIAN NATIONS OF THE NORTH, TILL THE FALL OR DIVISION OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE IN THE WEST, AGREEING NEARLY WITH THE PERIOD OF THE FIFTH CENTURY.—THE ERA OF CHRYSOSTOM AND AUGUSTIN.

THE last century contained one of those eras which have sometimes occurred in the history of mankind, when religion is drawn from her retirement, and becomes, from circumstances, one of the chief concerns of society. We could not, therefore, well separate the affairs of the church from the revolutions of the state. But we may now return to the method we had previously adopted, of taking first a summary view of secular history, and then pursuing the particular theme of our inquiry.

Had we, indeed, only to trace the history of the church at Constantinople and in the East, we should still be compelled to attend to the political changes in the imperial court, in order to discover the origin of those events which most distressed the church, or which most conduced to her external prosperity; but as the Imperial power becomes in this century so much contracted in its sway, and the church universal is the subject of our history, we must take a more comprehensive view, in order to illustrate the circumstances of her warfare. The churches of the West, also, are increasing in importance in the view of the ecclesiastical historian; and these soon become entirely separated from the protection or influence of the throne of the Cæsars.

<sup>1</sup> Milner.

<sup>2</sup> A.D. 395.

This century discloses, with respect to the Western empire, one of the greatest changes that ever took place in the state of the civilised world: no less, indeed, than an entire change of the inhabitants in many places; and every where the reduction of those who had ruled, and possessed the world before, to a state of slavery and ignominious poverty, under a set of new masters. This revolution was brought about by the mighty inundation of the barbarian nations of the North—our rude forefathers, as most of my readers probably may say—who finally divided the Roman empire amongst them, and erected the present nations of Europe, on its dismembered provinces. Why the churches of the West were not swept away in this great flood; and how it was that the rulers of the congregations still kept their stations, when almost all the civil authorities and temporal proprietors fell in the undistinguished mass, involve the consideration of a most wonderful dispensation of Providence. This, however, was the case; the church suffered much during the rush, and in the convulsion of the agitated waters; but when they became more settled, she was found unimpaired, and from various causes, as the Divine counsels required, arose to greater temporal importance in this new world<sup>1</sup>. And what did indeed make glad the city of God, although the new race of Gentiles have trampled her beneath their feet for many years, this inundation of nations brought with it, from their wild and savage abodes, a remnant to be saved according to the election of grace, and the promise is yet to them and their children: a subject of praise, I trust, to me and to my readers at this day.

### SECT. I.

But before we proceed to trace the progress of this great revolution in the Western empire, we shall take a short survey of the Eastern church, still connected with the throne of Constantinople. It has been remarked of the general character of the professing church, at this period, that useful learning, as well as genuine piety, was at a low ebb. A torrent of irrational superstitions was carrying every thing before it, and the ascetic enthusiasm of the monks, was fast drawing from society those who should have been the salt of the earth, and have meliorated the condition of mankind; but there seemed no

<sup>1</sup> Compare Rev. xii. 15, &c.

middle line between gross dissoluteness and fanatical mortification.

The beginning of this century found the famous John Chrysostom bishop of Constantinople. He was originally of Antioch, and, being designed for the profession of the law, had been educated under Libanius, a celebrated professor of eloquence and philosophy. As a proof of his sufficiency, it is recorded of him, that when his master was asked who was qualified to succeed him in his school, he answered: "John, if the Christians had not stolen him." For young Chrysostom, dissatisfied with his profession, and disgusted with the profligate lives of those who followed it, and influenced, as Socrates thinks, by the persuasions of Evagrius, a fellow student, resolved upon a more retired and peaceful course of life; and changing all his former habits, devoted himself to the study of the scriptures, and to the promotion of the Christian cause. It is said he prevailed upon two of his companions, who afterwards became bishops, to leave their lucrative profession, for the moderate contentment of the Christian recluse. John was first made a reader in the church of Antioch, when he wrote his treatise against the Jews. Meletius, the bishop of one of the churches—for the orthodox in Antioch were divided—made him a deacon; and during the period he filled that ministry, he wrote his book on the priesthood, &c. On the death of Meletius, Chrysostom withdrew from the communion of the church which had been under his care. He did not join that under Paulinus, but retired into privacy for three years; but when Evagrius was elected in the room of Paulinus, he again appeared in the church, and was ordained priest.

According to Socrates's report of his character, as given by one who knew him from his youth, "Chrysostom was more hasty than courteous, a man of great prudence and fore-thought, but, from his upright intentions and dealings, and inexperience of the world, which he despised, liable to be imposed upon; very eloquent in his speech, the strenuous rebuker of vice, and reformer of the lives of his auditors; insomuch, that to those who were unacquainted with the man, his addresses seemed to savour of pride and insolence."

The fame of the learning and eloquence of Chrysostom had reached Constantinople. The emperor Arcadius, with the consent both of the priests and the people, nominated him their bishop; and, though the opposition of the bishop of Alexandria, who had been called to give the greater dignity to his



consecration, threw some impediments in his way, by the good offices of Eutropius, a domestic of the palace, who counteracted the schemes of the worthless prelate, he was at length fixed in his see<sup>1</sup>. The discipline and reforming principles of Chrysostom, were but little relished by the clergy of Constantinople; and, though they much needed the correction of a diligent governor, he appears to have assumed an austere and ungracious deportment, and to have exercised his authority with a severity which hardly became a Christian bishop. His noble charities, however, and, above all, his popular eloquence, with his unsparing reproof of the vices of the great, made him a great favourite with the people. Immense crowds assembled at his lectures, which sometimes were given daily; and he addressed them, it is remarked, not from the bishop's seat, or from the steps of the altar, as had been usual, but, for the sake of being better heard, from the reader's desk, which was in the midst of the church<sup>2</sup>. It is said, that writers attended to take down his discourses, to whom the world is indebted for their publication. There was certainly a great disposition to hear, among the inhabitants of the Eastern metropolis, at this period: what share the love of Gospel truth had in this, it is impossible at this distance of time to ascertain. Doubtless, it had its share; but the homilies of Chrysostom, which are so much admired, do not impress us with an idea, that the taste of the times was generally very evangelical, or that the most popular preachers were very deeply imbued with the knowledge of the mystery of the faith. He seems, on the contrary, to have given full encouragement to the abject superstitions of the times. We read of an eloquent Syrian bishop, at this time, who left his own church, and amassed a great deal of money by preaching at Constantinople; and of another of the same description, who, excited by the report of his success, followed his example with equal profit.

To oppose the Arians, who had attracted some attention by the chants or anthems which they sung as they passed along the streets, in going to and returning from their places of worship in the suburbs, where only they were permitted to have them, the bishop sent forth his singers, with silver candlesticks like crosses, to do the same, and extol the blessed Trinity. This certainly counteracted the heretics, but it led to dangerous riots.

John, as we have observed, was the idol of the people of Constantinople; but his plain, perhaps satirical preaching,

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 398.

<sup>2</sup> Note in Milner.

had incensed many of the higher ranks against him ; and among others, Eudoxia, the empress, whom he had offended by a sermon against female follies or vices, which, if not indeed intended for her, was so applied by the audience, and reported to the empress. This increased the power of his adversaries, the most inveterate of whom were of his own order ; for the bishops of the Eastern church, at this time, were much disunited, and shewed any thing rather than an example of brotherly love. The practice of the church, as we have already seen, was for a number of bishops to assemble together in a council or synod, in order to enforce ecclesiastical discipline ; and these synods were now supposed to possess sufficient power to censure or depose any individual bishop. Chrysostom had himself, for just cause no doubt, deposed many bishops, through the medium of such assemblies ; but this species of episcopal government, it is obvious, was liable to great abuses ; and in a corrupt age, gave an ambitious prelate, who could influence a number of his brethren, great power of doing mischief.

This the story of Chrysostom greatly illustrates. Theophilus of Alexandria, perhaps at this time the second bishop of the East, (for the church of Antioch had sunk by its divisions,) was the personal enemy of John ; and a fit instrument for the purpose of those powerful individuals, both among the clergy and the laity, whom his faithfulness or hasty zeal had offended. It was contrived, that Theophilus should be brought to court to hold one of these ecclesiastical synods, for the condemnation of John.

Theophilus had himself lately narrowly escaped from the hands of the Egyptian monks. These recluses, increasing every age in ignorance and superstition, had taken it into their heads, that as man is said to be made in the likeness of God, God must have a corporeal frame like man. When they heard that the bishop of Alexandria, in his public address to the church, had condemned this absurd notion, on a sudden the Desert was emptied of its inhabitants, who flocked into the city with the intention of murdering the bishop ; and it was only by his superior address, and by seeming to embrace their opinions, that he escaped. He even appears to have had the art of turning this infatuation of the monks to serve his own purposes. This crafty prelate, and a number of other bishops, were called together, by an order which was procured from the emperor, to hold a council in the neighbourhood of Constantinople. The manner of his reception in that city, affords a picture of the times. The

bishops of the greater sees, though they held a rather precarious situation, were objects of the highest reverence and consideration. It is observed, that the bishop of Alexandria was not received at Constantinople with the accustomed honours—none of the clergy went to meet him; the sailors, however, of the corn ships from Alexandria, welcomed him, and received their bishop with loud and rejoicing shouts. It is also remarked, as something unusual, that he did not proceed to the house of prayer, but to the palace of the empress. When he was summoned to appear in the council, he refused, because it consisted of his enemies. He appealed to a general council, and being four times cited, and not appearing, he was, by their sentence, condemned and deposed.

When the report reached the city, the people were in an uproar, and waited all night around the church, lest he should be taken away from them; but John, as soon as he knew that it was the emperor's pleasure that he should go into banishment, yielded himself up secretly. When the bishop had departed, such were the discontent and threatening aspect of the people, that the court, being alarmed, sent for him in haste to return. The bishop having reached the suburbs, at first refused to enter the city, and resume his station, till his sentence should be repealed by a regular synod. But the fury of the populace could, by no means, brook the delay; he was compelled to enter the city, and was conducted with great respect to the church. They requested him to offer, as bishop, the accustomed prayer for the church, which, when he declined doing, till he should be regularly restored, they forced him to comply; and, when he had prayed in his seat, they compelled him to preach to them. It appears that Theophilus, and the bishops of his party, still remained to oppose John; and that the Alexandrians, and the people of Constantinople, came to an open fray in the streets, in which many lives were lost. Theophilus and his party afterwards fled from the city.

This triumphant restoration, we may easily suppose, would not abate the accustomed boldness of the eloquent preacher. Offence had been given by the erection of a statue of the empress at no great distance from the church of St. Sophia, about which games and pastimes were celebrated. This was a fruitful subject for the bishop's indignant oratory. Neither princes nor magistrates were spared, and the unfortunate empress was taught to feel herself particularly pointed at and insulted. Nor was she backward to resent it, but resolved on a second

council and deposition. It was in the brooding of this storm that the bishop preached a memorable sermon, beginning with these words: "Now again Herodias rages, now again she dances, and demands again John's head in a charger." His oratory, however, this time, cost the bishop dear: the government had power to find a synod to condemn him, and his banishment followed<sup>1</sup>, with the depression of a party that still adhered to him. But the lameness of his meek successor, Arsacius, under whom the church enjoyed great quietness, an extraordinary storm of hail, and the death of the empress, which soon followed, were all considered, by many, as judgments of heaven for the injustice done to John. His followers, contrary to his advice, had, for some years, a separate communion, and went by the name of Johannites. Chrysostom was the same man in his banishment, and won on many by his eloquence, and by his liberality, which he was enabled to support by the remittances of a rich lady named Olympias, who had formerly been a deaconess in his church. But the malice of his enemies pursued, and hurried him from place to place. Exhausted, at length, by the harsh treatment of his guards, after receiving the Lord's Supper, and finishing his prayer with his usual doxology, "Glory be to God for all events," he expired, in the fifty-third year of his age<sup>2</sup>.

Arsacius had died soon after his election, and, after a long and troublesome contest, was succeeded by Atticus. To reconcile the Johannites to the general church, he caused the memorial of Chrysostom, as of other deceased bishops, to be solemnized in the service of the church. When he was urged to restrict the Novatians in their privilege of having places of worship within the city, he pointed out the distinction between that and other sects, that they had been fellow-sufferers for the truth, with the church, in the Arian persecution; that, although they had been long separated from the general church, they had introduced no novelties concerning the faith. The Novatians, indeed, began to be at variance among themselves, especially concerning the time of celebrating Easter. The chief distinction between them and the church, was still noted to be, that, for what were deemed sins unto death, and for which the general church would deprive their clergy, the Novatians would expel the laity from communion. And they considered that the power of the church to remit sins, extended not to those who were thus expelled. John Chrysostom had not a little offended

<sup>1</sup> Milner.

<sup>2</sup> Milner.

them, by saying, "If thou fall a thousand times and repent thee of thy sins, come boldly into the Church."

The urbanity and liberal expenditure of Atticus, were much praised, and also his extensive reading; but it is observed of his sermons, that they were so simple, that his hearers thought them not worth committing to writing for the benefit of posterity<sup>1</sup>. At the death of Atticus, great contention took place about the election of a successor; but the laity were unanimous for Sisinius, a priest of one of the churches in the suburbs, where all the people of Constantinople were wont to celebrate the feast of Ascension. He was esteemed a very religious and most charitable man, even beyond his means. On the death of Sisinius, the emperor, to avoid the tumult of the contending parties, resolved, that no member of the church of Constantinople should be advanced to the bishop's seat, but that a stranger should be sent for, from Antioch. The choice fell upon Nestorius, a German by birth, residing in that city. The qualifications which recommended him, were "that he had a loud voice, and an eloquent tongue, and therefore, as it was conceived, a fit man to preach to the people<sup>2</sup>."

But during the very ceremony of his installation, it was discovered what sort of a man they had chosen; for, in pronouncing his oration he addressed the emperor, then present: "Restore to me, O emperor, the earth weeded and purged of heretics, and I will give heaven to thee; aid me in foiling the heretics, and I will assist thee in overthrowing the Persians." His violence was soon manifested in his persecution of all who had dissented from the church. The Arians, to avoid its demolition, set fire to their own place of worship. If it had not been for the interference of the emperor, he would have molested the Novatians also. He procured, even from those of his own faith, the epithet of "fire-brand." It was viewed as a just retaliation upon this persecuting prelate, that he himself was, at last, cast out of the church for heresy. A favourite priest, who had followed him from Antioch, had offended the orthodox of Constantinople, by denying to the Virgin Mary the title of the Mother of God. "The clergy and laity," says Socrates, "were disgusted beyond measure; for they had learned of old, that Christ was the true God, and not to be severed, as man alone, from his divinity, because of the mystery of his incarnation." And, therefore, Mary might justly be said to have borne God, — God incarnate,

<sup>1</sup> Socrates.

<sup>2</sup> Socrates, lib. lvii. cap. 29.

who, by reason of his assumption of humanity, did not become two persons, but united in one person, the Godhead and the manhood.—He that was God, sustaining the birth of the Virgin Mary, according to the flesh. Nestorius, who, though proud of his eloquence, was very deficient in learning, and in the knowledge of the ancient theology, rashly defended his priest, and maintained, openly, the truth of his doctrine. His station in the church, in those days, could not shelter him from the judgment of the church. A council of the principal bishops was held at Ephesus<sup>1</sup>, and though they quarrelled with each other about the method of proceeding, they agreed in condemning Nestorius. “He would not,” he declared in the council, “call him God, who grew to man’s estate by two months, and three months, and so forth.” He was accordingly deposed from his bishopric, and banished: but he left, in Constantinople, a party favourable to him, among the laity, for the clergy were unanimous in pronouncing his public anathema; and also among some bishops of the provinces. Hence the rise of the Nestorians, a sect which has ever since existed in the Eastern Church.

After some contest, Maximianus succeeded Nestorius. He is said to have procured to himself, the character of a very religious man, by the great costs that he had been at in building the tombs of the religious. He was a man destitute of learning, but of a quiet and peaceful disposition. After two years, he was followed by Proclus, who, with more cultivated talents, inherited the same peaceful disposition, and never attempted to molest those who differed from him in the faith. By the honours which he procured to be paid to the remains of John Chrysostom, he reconciled to the general church, those of his followers who remained, and who had till that time kept themselves separate.

In the days of Flavianus, the next bishop who succeeded to Proclus, a new heresy appeared, respecting the person of Christ, the opposite to that of Nestorius, and which, also, has left a lasting impression on the Eastern churches. The author of this new doctrine was Eutyches. As Nestorius divided the Godhead and the manhood in the blessed Saviour into two persons, Eutyches confounded the two natures together. “I confess,” says he, “that our Lord consisted of two natures, before the Divinity was coupled with the humanity; but after the uniting them, I affirm, that he had but one nature<sup>2</sup>.” His opinions were condemned by Flavianus, in a council at Constantinople.

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 435.

<sup>2</sup> Evagrius Scholasticus, lib. i. cap. 9.



A shameful scene occurred among some leading bishops, assembled at Ephesus, in opposition to Flavianus, instigated by a courtier, his personal enemy. The protectors of the heresy seemed, for some time, triumphant. Flavianus was deposed and murdered. To relate the particulars of this affair would throw but little light on the history of the church. Orthodoxy, however, was again vindicated in a general council, held at Chalcedon; but the followers of Eutyches still remained as a sect. The decrees of the council of Chalcedon were, for some years, a matter of contest among the Eastern bishops; and their uninteresting history is filled with mutual anathemas, and depositions against each other. The appointment, or the elections of the bishops to the greater sees, as Constantinople, Alexandria, and Antioch, were constantly attended with popular tumults and military violence; and the characters of the prelates, who were generally advanced to these important stations, are suitable to any thing rather than to the characters of the more primitive bishops, and of the apostles of Jesus Christ.

Such is the history of the leading personages of the Eastern church at this period; but, as the accounts of kings and warriors, though they fill the pages of general history, leave undescribed the more multiplied, and, therefore, more important scenes of private life, we must recollect, that the history of the bishops of the great sees, does not expose to our view the private and domestic retreats of religion, or even the state of more obscure churches. We see, however, to what an extent pride and worldly ambition had already desolated the high places, at least of the church in the East; and as no religious revival appears in this part of the professing world, we shall not be surprised to find that, as a people, they are, in the judgment of God, given up almost to entire destruction.

## SECT. II.

I shall now give a short account of the inroad of the northern nations in the West; so important to the church and to that portion of the globe, tracing the progress of the three greatest leaders of the barbarians, ALARIC, GENSERIC, ATTILA; “names,” says Mr. Gibbon, “deserving an equal rank in the destruction of the Roman empire;” and shall take notice of the final extinction of the old Imperial government at Rome, and the settlement of the new nations in the different provinces.



I. The barbarian nations had for some time previous to the commencement of this century become formidable to the empire; but the prudence and success of Theodosius had suspended the storm<sup>1</sup>. In the year A.D. 379, Valens “was informed that the north was agitated with a furious tempest.” This was a conflict of the barbarian nations among themselves, which drove the Goths, who were situated nearest its boundary, into the provinces of the empire. Mr. Gibbon computes this first emigration, “reserved to subvert the foundations of Rome,” at “near a million of souls.” They were at first imprudently permitted to settle upon the uncultivated lands of Thrace. Fresh inundations of their countrymen soon followed, “exasperated with hunger and the oppression of the Roman governors.” “War is resolved on;” “the banners of the nation are displayed, and the air resounds with the harsh and mournful sounds of the Gothic trumpet.” Hence followed “the ruin of the peaceful husbandmen of Thrace, the conflagration of their villages, and the massacre or captivity of their innocent families.” “The fruitful country, that extends above three hundred miles from the banks of the Danube to the Straits of the Hellespont,” is laid waste. It was in opposing these that the emperor Valens fell, with two-thirds of his army, “and the tide of the Gothic inundation rolled from the walls of Hadrianople to the suburbs of Constantinople.” The reign of Theodosius, from A.D. 379 to A.D. 395, suspended the evil, and vindicated the honour of the empire.

But, “if the subjects of Rome could be ignorant of their obligations to the great Theodosius, they were too soon convinced how painfully the spirit and abilities of the deceased emperor had supported the frail and mouldering edifice of the republic.” In the same winter that he died, the Gothic nation was in arms; troops of barbarians “were irregularly spread from the woody shores of Dalmatia to the walls of Constantinople.” “The following year Alaric, the most valiant of their kings, marched them into Greece.” “The fertile fields of Phocis and Bœotia were instantly covered with a deluge of barbarians; who massacred the males of an age to bear arms, and drove away the beautiful females, with the spoil and cattle of the flaming villages.” Athens submitted to Alaric; —“the whole territory of Attica, from the promontory of Sunium to the town of Megara, was blasted with his baneful presence — Corinth,

<sup>1</sup> Foretold in the symbols of the first trumpet, Rev. viii. 7.

Argos, and Sparta, yielded without resistance." He was attacked by Stilicho, the Roman general; and "the woody and mountainous country of Arcadia, the fabulous residence of Pan and the Dryads, became the scene of a long and doubtful conflict." The European provinces of the Eastern empire being exhausted, Alaric is tempted by the fame, the beauty, and the wealth of Italy. He accordingly invades Italy<sup>1</sup>. Honorius, who succeeded his father in the West, flees from Milan, is pursued, and besieged by the Goths. The battle of Pollentia, won by the Romans, checks the invaders, but only prolongs the miseries of the conflict. "Desolation is spread over the fruitful face of Tuscany." The capital is saved for the present, but the storm thickens in another quarter, and lends its fatal aid to the destructions of Alaric. "The correspondence of nations was, in that age, so precarious and imperfect, that the revolutions of the North might escape the knowledge of the court of Ravenna, till the dark cloud which was collected along the coast of the Baltic, burst in thunder upon the banks of the Upper Danube." The barbarians here referred to, were the Vandals, the Suevi, the Burgundians, and the Alani. These nations never afterwards retreated, but seized upon the provinces beyond the Alps. "While the peace of Germany was secured, the banks of the Rhine were crowned, like those of the Tiber, with elegant houses and well cultivated farms." "This scene of peace and plenty was suddenly changed into a desert, and the prospect of the smoking ruins could alone distinguish the solitude of nature from the desolations of man." "The consuming flames of war spread from the banks of the Rhine over the greatest part of the seventeen provinces of Gaul: that rich and extensive country, as far as the ocean, the Alps, and the Pyrenees, was delivered to the barbarians."

About the same time the Roman armies were withdrawn from Britain, and the inhabitants left to protect themselves. To complete the history of this dreadful calamity, Alaric three times besieged Rome, and the third time it was sacked by his army<sup>2</sup>. "At the hour of midnight, the Salarian gate was silently opened by the slaves, and the inhabitants were awakened by the tremendous sound of the Gothic trumpet. Eleven hundred and sixty-three years after the foundation of Rome, the imperial city, which had subdued and civilised so considerable a portion of mankind, was delivered to the licentious fury of the

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 400.<sup>2</sup> A.D. 410.

tribes of Germany and Scythia." "For four years they reigned without control, over a country which, in the opinion of the ancients, had united all the excellencies of nature and art." "Each soldier claimed an ample share of the substantial plenty, the corn and cattle, oil and wine, that was daily collected and consumed in the Gothic camps; and the principal warriors insulted the villas and gardens once inhabited by Lucullus and Cicero, along the beauteous coast of Campania."

II. The next great calamity which befel the Roman world, were the naval victories<sup>1</sup> and depredations of the Vandals. They had prevailed over the other barbarians, and over the last efforts of the Roman power in Spain. "Seville and Carthage became the prey of the ferocious conquerors: the vessels which they found in the harbours of the latter might easily transport them to the isles of Majorca and Minorca, where the Spanish fugitives, as in a secure recess, had vainly concealed their families and their fortunes. The experience of navigation, and perhaps the prospect of Africa, encouraged the Vandals." "The terrible Genseric becomes their leader. He embarks, with 50,000 effective men, at Gibraltar<sup>2</sup>. The long and narrow tract of the African coast was filled with frequent monuments of Roman art and magnificence, and the respective degrees of improvement might be accurately measured from Carthage and the Mediterranean." The country was most populous, and yet so fertile, that its annual exportation of wheat procured for Africa the title of the granary of the world. "On a sudden the seven fruitful provinces, from Tangier to Tripoli, were overwhelmed by the invasion of the Vandals." "Where they found resistance they seldom gave quarter." "Careless of the distinctions of age, sex, or rank, they employed every species of indignity and torture to force from the captives a discovery of their hidden wealth. Carthage, Cirta, and Hippo Regius, were the only cities that appeared to rise above the general inundation." These cities at length fell.

"After he had permitted his licentious troops to satiate their rage and avarice, Genseric instituted a more regular system of rapine and oppression." "He cast his eyes upon the sea and resolved to create a naval power, animating his daring Vandals to embrace a mode of warfare that would render every maritime country accessible to their arms;" "and the fleets which issued from the ports of Carthage again, after the interval of six

<sup>1</sup> Foretold by the symbols of the Second Trumpet, Rev. viii. 8, 9.    <sup>2</sup> A.D. 429.

centuries, claimed the empire of the Mediterranean." They conquered Sicily, and made frequent descents on the coasts of Lucania. They entered the Tiber, and the emperor was murdered in the streets. "Rome and its inhabitants were delivered up to the licentiousness of the Moors and Vandals."—"The pillage lasted fourteen days and nights; and all that yet remained of public or private wealth, of sacred or profane treasure, was diligently transported to the vessels of Genseric. Many thousand Romans of both sexes, chosen for some useful or agreeable qualification, reluctantly embarked on board the fleet of Genseric; and their distress was aggravated by the unfeeling barbarians, who, in the division of the booty, separated the wives from their husbands, and the children from their parents." The long-extended shores of Italy were for several years exposed to the depredations of the "monarch of the sea." In the spring of each year he equipped a formidable navy in the port of Carthage, and Genseric himself, even in his advanced age, still commanded the expeditions. "The celerity of their motions enabled them almost at the same time to threaten and to attack the most distant objects which attracted their desire; and as they always embarked a sufficient number of horses, they had no sooner landed than they swept the dismayed country before them." Genseric kept his designs secret till the moment he set sail; and, as if he felt himself the instrument of Divine vengeance, "when he was asked by the pilot what course he should steer; 'Leave the determination to the winds,' was the reply; 'they will transport us to the guilty coast whose inhabitants have provoked the Divine justice.' The powers of the Eastern empire were exhausted<sup>1</sup> in vain, in the attempt to deliver Italy and the Mediterranean from the Vandals. Genseric continued to his death the "tyrant of the seas."

It is remarkable, that about this time our ancestors, the Saxons, appeared in the same character on the northern and western shores of the empire. In the year 449, Hengist and Horsa were invited by Vortigern, the British king, to fight his battles. In the year 455, Hengist turned against his employers, defeated them, and founded the kingdom of Kent. Sidonius, bishop of Clermont, thus describes the Saxons: "We have not a more cruel enemy than the Saxons. They overcome all who have the courage to oppose them. They surprise all who are so

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 448.

imprudent as not to be prepared for their attack. When they pursue, they infallibly overtake: when they are pursued, their escape is certain. They despise danger; they are inured to shipwreck; they are eager to purchase booty with the peril of their lives. Tempests, which to others are so dreadful, to them are subjects of joy. The storm is their protection when they are pressed by the enemy, and a cover for their operations when they meditate an attack. Before they quit their own shores, they devote, to the altars of their gods, the tenth part of the principal captives; and when they are on the point of returning, the lots are cast with an affectation of equity, and the impious vow is fulfilled<sup>1</sup>." Such was the introduction of the more numerous part of our ancestors to the knowledge of the civilised world.

III. The third avenging scourge of the times were the Huns, "who had driven the Goths and the Vandals before them, and had spread from the Volga to the Danube<sup>2</sup>. In the reign of Attila<sup>3</sup> they became the terror of the world." Of Attila, the historian tells us, "His head rather than his hands achieved the conquest of the North"—"he surpassed his rude countrymen in art rather than in courage"—"his monarchy was erected on the basis of popular superstition." "The religious acts of Attila were not less skilfully adapted than those of Gengis to the character of his age and country."—"He acquired a sacred character, which rendered his conquest more easy and more permanent; and the barbarian princes confessed, in the language of devotion or of flattery, that they could not presume to gaze with a steady eye on the divine majesty of the king of the Huns." "He was able to bring into the field five, or, according to another account, seven hundred thousand barbarians."

In the year 441, they made their grand attack on the Eastern empire, and destroyed, with fire and sword, all the cities about the Danube and its tributary streams. "The whole breadth of Europe, as it extends above five hundred miles from the Euxine to the Hadriatic, was at once invaded and occupied and desolated by the myriads of the barbarians whom Attila led into the field." The armies of the eastern empire were vanquished in successive engagements, and Attila ravaged, without mercy, the provinces of Thrace and Macedonia. Heraclea and Hadrianople

<sup>1</sup> See Lingard's Hist. of England, vol. 4. p. 67.

<sup>2</sup> Foretold by the symbols of the Third Trumpet, Rev. viii. 10, 11.

<sup>3</sup> A.D. 433.

might, perhaps, escape this dreadful irruption of the Huns : but those words which are the most expressive of total extirpation and erasement were applied to the calamities which they inflicted on seventy cities of the Eastern empire. Theodosius II. was reduced to solicit peace, and resigned " the extensive and important territory which stretched along the southern banks of the Danube, from Singidunum or Belgrade, as far as Novæ in the diocese of Thrace. — The breadth was defined by the vague computation of fifteen days' journey," " but it appears Naissus was within the limits." " The Huns were masters of the Danube, and insulted the empire with impunity. In the year 450, Attila prepares to invade the West ; and the waters of the Po, of the Rhine, and of the Necker, are ' rendered bitter,' as well as the streams of the Danube. The numbers slain in the battle of Chalons, have been rated from 150,000 to 300,000.

IV. The fourth awful disaster of the times, was the entire extinction of the imperial government in the West<sup>1</sup>. Nothing could be more deplorable than the state of affairs in the Latin world after the sacking of Rome by Genseric. The remnant of the imperial authority continued for some years longer. Majorian drove the Vandals from Italy<sup>2</sup>. The empire then passed into the hands of Ricimer, Glycerius, and Julius Nepos. After him, by the help of the barbarians, Orestes obtained the dignity. On his resisting their demands for the third part of the lands of Italy, they associated under the command of Odoacer the Goth, who deposed the last of the Roman emperors, Augustulus Momyllus, making him the instrument of his own disgrace. He signified his resignation to the senate, and in their letter to the Eastern emperor Zeno, they in their own name, and in the name of the people, consent that the seat of empire shall be transferred from Rome to Constantinople. The republic, they say, may be safely confided to the civil and military virtues of Odoacer, and they humbly request for him the title of patrician; with the ministration of the diocese of Italy. Thus the right of the Goths, who before possessed the power, was formally confirmed, and the dominion of the barbarians established in Rome.

<sup>1</sup> Foretold by the symbols of the Fourth Trumpet, Rev. viii. 13.

<sup>2</sup> A. D. 458.

<sup>3</sup> A.D. 476.



## SECT. III.

As the history of the church, at the commencement of this century, was distinguished by the flourishing of John Chrysostom in the East, so, the memorials of a still more eminent Christian father illustrate the same period in the West. This was Augustin, bishop of Hippo Regius, in Africa, who flourished among the Roman provincials of that country immediately before its desolation by the Vandals. Augustin was born at Tagasta, in Numidia; his father was a pagan, and continued so<sup>1</sup> till near his death; his mother, Monica, was a Christian of great piety. He describes himself, when a boy, on occasion of a severe illness, to have earnestly desired Christian baptism; but on his recovery, according to a superstitious notion, which had long been growing in the church, respecting the external rite of baptism, it was judged prudent to defer the ceremony, because a relapse into sin after baptism was considered as particularly dangerous. Himself afterwards bewails the mischief of this error: "Why do we hear every where such sounds as these, Let him do what he will, he is not yet baptised. How much better for me had I been, in more early life, initiated into the fold of Christ?" He bewails, in the language of a true penitent, his unbridled licentiousness, which burst forth in his sixteenth year. He was now sent to Carthage for his improvement in oratory, being intended for the profession of the law. In his nineteenth year, his mind was much diverted from its former pursuits, by an earnest desire after philosophical knowledge, with which the reading of Cicero had inspired him. About this period he met with the Manichees, one of the Gnostic sects, and imbibed all their absurdities, to the great grief of his pious mother, whose soul was much drawn out in prayer for her only son; the perception of which extorted from a Christian bishop, whom, with great importunity, she was requesting to reason with her son, in order to recover him from his errors, this remarkable exclamation: "Your son is too proud to listen at present to argument—go, it is not possible a child of such prayers should perish." The answer impressed her like a voice from heaven, and it pleased God to cherish her hopes by a dream she had concerning her son.

For nine years, till he attained the age of twenty-eight, he describes himself as "deceived and deceiving others"—"a slave to carnal lusts." At this time he supported himself by teaching rhetoric in his native town. In the following year,

<sup>1</sup> Milner, vol. ii. p. 299, note.

<sup>2</sup> Milner, vol. ii. p. 302.



he removed to Carthage, and became sensible of the folly of Manicheism, though he still united himself to the sect. By their means, when he was at Rome, whither he had removed from Carthage, he obtained the appointment of a professorship of rhetoric, at Milan. In this city he was much impressed with the ministry of the bishop, Ambrose; and he became a professed catechumen in his church. His pious mother followed him, and was pleased at the situation in which she found him, though he still describes his mind as being in great doubt and uncertainty. He says, "It was not in his power to consult Ambrose as he could have wished, surrounded as he was with crowds of persons, whose necessities he relieved; for the very little time he was from them, he was either refreshing his body with food, or his mind with reading. Hence I had no opportunity to unbosom myself to him. A few words of conversation sufficed not. I expected in vain to find him at leisure for a long conversation. I profited, however, by his sermons. Every Lord's day I heard him instructing the people." At the age of thirty years, he speaks of himself as unreformed in his conduct, and as much distressed in his mind; though his prejudices against the truth and against the church, were much removed. Still the question much perplexed him, Whence came evil? "Admitting its cause to be in the will of man — that the distinction between a natural and moral inability is real and just, and the latter is a subject of blame, though the former is not — still I inquired, who ingrafted into my stem this scion of bitterness, seeing that I was created by Him who is infinite sweetness."

He was afterwards enabled to answer this question to his own satisfaction: "Evil is not a thing to be created — let good things only forsake their just place, office, and order, and then, though all be good in their nature, evil, which is only a privative, abounds and produces positive misery. I asked, what was iniquity? and I found it to be no substance, but a perversity of the will, which inclines from THEE, the supreme substance, to lower things, and casts away its internal excellencies, and swells with pride externally."

He afterwards describes the progress he had made in true knowledge from reading the Scriptures, "I approved of the Saviour in general, who is the Way, but was offended with his narrow way." He had recourse to Simplician, an eminent Christian, who had been the spiritual father of bishop Ambrose, and his advice and admonition he found most profitable to him. He describes his state: "The new will, which was beginning in

me, to worship thee freely, and enjoy thee, my sole certain pleasure, was not yet strong enough to overcome the old one hardened by custom. Thus two wills, the old and the new, the flesh and the spirit, contended within me, and between them tore my very soul."—"My meditations on thee were like the attempts of men desirous of waking, but sinking again into sleep." He further describes himself, on a particular occasion, when in great agitation and distress of mind, as thinking he heard a voice, saying, "Take up and read—take up and read." He was in his garden, and had left St. Paul's Epistles on his table in his study; he opened, and read what first struck his eyes, "Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lust thereof." This passage, to use the words of the apostle, came to his heart "with power, with the Holy Ghost, with much assurance," and burst asunder the bond that had tied him to carnal pleasure. He immediately acknowledged the power that wrought within him, and gladdened his aged mother with the happy intelligence of what had passed in his mind. Augustin now received baptism; and soon afterwards, when returning to Africa, he lost his pious mother by the way. We perceive he was not free, on this occasion, from the growing superstition of praying for the dead.

His views of himself, after his conversion, however, bespeak the man who knows himself by the light of life. "I would rejoice with trembling in what thou hast given me, and mourn over that which is imperfect, and hope that thou wilt perfect thy mercies when death shall be swallowed up in victory." "I am a sinful man, however I magnify thy name; and he who overcame the world, and numbers me among the weak members of his body, intercedes for my sins." "I am poor and needy, and my best method is to seek thy mercy in secret groans and in self-abhorrence, till thou perfect that which concerneth me." "Sometimes thou introducest me into an uncommon affection, into a sweetness past the power of description; which, were it perfected in me, I should not see what life would want to complete its felicity. But I sink back by the weight of misery, and am held entangled."

After living on his own estate in retirement for nearly three years, Augustin was ordained a presbyter in the church at Hippo, and obtained a license from Valerius, the bishop, to preach in his presence, a thing noted as at that time unknown

in Africa. As the infirmities of the aged bishop increased, he procured Augustin to be elected as joint bishop with himself, and as his successor; and such was the eminence of the bishop of Hippo, that he soon became the great light of the church in the West; and in the monastery which he instituted were educated numbers of pious persons, who were afterwards promoted in the churches, and diffused abroad the knowledge of his writings.

What has rendered the name of Augustin particularly celebrated in the history of his day, is, the able manner in which he combated an erroneous scheme of doctrine, which, soon after the commencement of the century<sup>1</sup>, made its appearance in the West. This was Pelagianism; so called from Pelagius, a British monk. He taught, "That there was no original sin — that children are born in the perfection of the first parent at his creation — that both he and they would have died had there been no sin; and that man hath now a natural power, both to avoid sin and to fulfil the commands of God — that nature being in its pristine condition, all the use of grace must be to co-operate with it in order to render the work due from nature more easy; and that grace is universal, or God would be partial and unjust to grant it to one and deny it to another — that this grace works only in the improvement of man's natural faculties<sup>2</sup>." These doctrines appeared to Chrysostom, as well as to Augustin, as originating a fatal heresy. Innocent, bishop of Rome, also condemned the opinions, as "horrible, hitherto unprecedented in the Christian world." And Jerom, a presbyter of Antioch, was also engaged in defending the ancient faith. But Augustin was the chief person who was called to combat the heresiarch, and by his greater religious knowledge, he was far more fitted for the undertaking. Coelestius, the friend and supporter of Pelagius, had made his appearance<sup>3</sup>, and they both began to

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 404.

<sup>2</sup> "We have free-will to sin or not to sin; which [free-will] in good works is always helped by Divine aid" — "this power we say is in all in general, in Christians, Jews, and Gentiles. In all there is free-will equally by nature, but in Christians alone it is helped by grace. In others there is a good condition, naked and unarmed; but in those who belong to Christ it is fortified by his assistance. Persons, therefore, are to be condemned, who, when they have free-will, by which they might come to faith, and obtain the grace of God, abuse their liberty; but those are to be rewarded, who, using free-will aright, obtain the favour of God, and keep his commandments." — *Fragments of Pelagius, in Augustin.*

<sup>3</sup> A.D. 412.

propagate their opinions at Carthage. The first was summoned to appear before a synod called by Aurelius, bishop of that city, in which he was charged with denying original sin. When he was pressed with the custom of the church in baptising infants, as a proof of her belief, in all ages, that infants needed redemption, he declared that they had no need of remission, and yet ought to be baptised that they might be sanctified in Christ. Coelestius was condemned. Pelagius, however, had the address to procure an acquittal of the charge of false doctrine in a small synod in Palestine; but the African bishops concurred with the bishop of Rome, in condemning the heresy, and in pronouncing Pelagius and his followers to be guilty of the charge brought against them. They had, however, the art to impose, by their ambiguous language, on Sozimus, the successor of Innocent; but he afterwards suffered himself to be undeceived — “the Roman bishops,” as Mr. Milner remarks, “not having learned to be *infallible*,” — and openly condemned the heretics. The emperor Honorius, by two edicts, banished them from Rome<sup>1</sup>.

Notwithstanding the general condemnation of the first broachers of this heretical doctrine, Pelagianism, in a modified form, which has been called Semi-Pelagianism, still maintained its ground, though combated by Augustin, Prosper, and Hilary. Vitalis, of Carthage, and John Cassian, a monk of Marseilles, were its chief advocates.

Its principles have been thus stated: “That though man fell, yet he lost not *all* his powers, but that he still has a natural will and strength towards [spiritual] good — a capacity of asking, by use of which capacity he may render himself fit for grace, *ex congruo*, or meet to receive it; and that then by the use of this grace he may obtain salvation, *ex condigno*, or of merit and desert: in a word, that the potency of faith is in a man’s self, being only the exertion of a natural faculty; and that God’s election doth not arise from his own eternal counsel and will, but from the foresight only of the right use of free-will in the creatures. That the grace of God is necessary, as without it man cannot do good works; but that he must come to God first, believing in him of his own will and strength, without any grace for that purpose, because grace is the reward of previous faith, not faith the fruit of grace; that grace when given is imparted to the rational and natural faculties, in order to enable them to work out and merit salvation; and that electing grace is an impious

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 418 and 420.

doctrine, tending to establish the Stoical notion of fate and necessity."

Against the maintainers of these doctrines, which differed not essentially from the principles of the Alexandrian school, that for ages, as we have seen, had corrupted the mystery of the faith in the church, especially of the East, Augustin wrote his books "on predestination," and "on the gift of perseverance." I quote a short passage from a letter of this father to Vitalis, not only on account of the argument, but because it shews in what order "the principles of the doctrine of Christ" were still taught in the church. Augustin undertakes to convince Vitalis of his error, by pressing upon his conscience the duty, confessed by Christians to be binding upon all, to pray for their fellow-creatures; "for infidels, that they might believe; for catechumens, that God would inspire them with a desire for regeneration; and for the faithful, that they may persevere." He shews that the necessary consequence of Vitalis's sentiments was, that pastors should content themselves with preaching the doctrine to men, without praying for them.

In all points to which the Pelagian heresies relate, in which, indeed, the powers of his mind were most exercised, Augustin holds the first rank as a theologian; and the reading of his works has been a source of religious improvement to many, in all subsequent ages. In the darkest times of the apostasy, they were the means of nurturing many in secret. Even to this day, in Roman catholic countries, there exist a people far superior in the knowledge of the truth to the generality of the papists, who are attached to the writings of this father. They were also of the highest benefit to those who planted the reformed churches. Their grand deficiency is, that the statements of doctrine which they contain amalgamate but too easily with the rising superstitions and corruptions which, from before the time of Augustin, began to spread so widely in the Christian church, and probably were not without their influence upon his own mind. As Mr. Milner has pointed out, he was not clear and express on the doctrine of justification by faith alone; a doctrine which, had it had its due prominence in the instructions delivered to the people, would have preserved every sincere Christian from the worst part of that system of superstition, "voluntary humiliation," with the "worshipping of angels" or other mediators, which, though it did not alarm the fathers of Augustin's age, was rising rapidly, and was soon to desolate the whole Christian church.

Augustin knew little of the righteousness of faith, as distinct from the “work of faith, the patience of hope, and the labour of love.”—In the sensible abounding of these fruits, in purity, and in the subduing of carnal self, he sought acceptance at the tribunal of God, for Christ’s sake. What was the proper source of these heavenly virtues, necessary to be found in every Christian, he knew well, and maintained most ably. This was the point in dispute in his day, and he asserted, against his opponents, that all was of grace—all the effect of a Divine influence upon the heart; for this is the meaning of grace in the Pelagian controversies. Mr. Milner seems to praise him for connecting the Scriptural doctrines of election and predestination only with this work of the Spirit, and not with the redemption of the Son of God. “The notion of particular redemption,” he says, “was unknown to the ancients, and I wish it had been to the moderns!”

That this doctrine was, indeed, unknown to the ancients, will hardly be conceded; and, as closely connected with his ignorance of this doctrine, some will view the great error of Augustin’s divinity; for, although in the first two principles of the doctrines of Christ, “repentance from dead works,” and “faith towards God,” particular redemption, and all “the grace given us in Christ, before the foundations of the world were laid,” come not so much into view; yet, in every other principle, and in all that regards the building up of the believer in his holy faith, it should enter fundamentally into the instructions of the Christian teacher; and without this, the full value is not given, and cannot be given, to the doctrines of the atonement and of the new covenant,—of the work of Christ as the federal head and surety of his people, and, by consequence, not to the all-important proposition, “By grace ye are saved through faith”—“freely by *his* grace, through the redemption that is in Christ.” “It is of faith,” says the apostle, “that it might be by GRACE;” that is, by the tender mercy, the “loving-kindness,” or *erubescency* of the Divine love,—“of faith,” that the gratuitous nature of the benefit may be seen and acknowledged in the manner of the bestowal.

But Augustin’s divinity puts one part of salvation for the whole, and the manifested effects, for the secret and eternal cause which is revealed to faith. Grace he takes in its secondary sense of Divine influence, and the salvation in his view, is “the inherent righteousness” which it produces in the believer. But if this only is before the eyes of the penitent believer, the at-



tempt to establish that righteousness as a ground of acceptance with God, though it be admitted to be of electing grace, will leave the mind a prey to all that uncertainty, and all those gloomy fears, which render it subject to bondage; and, in superstitious times, will divest the tender conscience of that boldness which would enable it to stand fast against the beguilement "of voluntary humility," and of all the vaunted aids of an adventitious holiness which the commandments of men enforce. To what Augustin, and some of his contemporaries have said, respecting that "grace of the Spirit which conquers lusts and temptations," and purifies the heart, nothing need be abstracted, nothing can be added. Those who really experienced the truth and efficacy of this work of grace, were safe, — safer than they could know: without the experience of this work of grace, we have not the faith which justifies. But, that all the mystery of godliness should be merged in this system of public instruction, seems as if the Israel of God were again to be shut up under the law, till faith should come." There was, however, heavenly manna in the doctrine; and by this the church was nourished in the wilderness, when she fled from "the face of the dragon," to the place prepared for her, "for a time and times, and a dividing of time."

The ministry of Augustin was exercised immediately before the invasion of Africa by the Vandals. He lived to bewail the desolation of the provinces, and was himself besieged by Genseric in his own city of Hippo. In the third month of the siege he was seized with a fever, and died in the seventy-sixth year of his age<sup>1</sup>. The city held out eleven months longer, and was one of the last that fell into the hands of the barbarians. Augustin used repeatedly to say, "that a Christian should never cease to repent till the hour of his death." The penitential psalms were inscribed on his wall, and in his last sickness, he read them frequently, and wept abundantly. During the ten days that preceded his death, he desired to be left much alone, that he might be uninterrupted in his devotions.

We shall pursue the remaining history of the African provinces in this century. These provinces were now given up to the barbarians, and nine years after the siege of Hippo, Carthage itself fell. Genseric, who was an Arian, persecuted with great cruelty the clergy of the general church. But before this dreadful visitation, superstition and lewdness, oppression and cruelty,

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 430.



had become awfully predominant in the last generation of the old civilised world, which was now swept off before the barbarian Vandals; so much so, indeed, that the dominion of the barbarians, when once established, was more tolerable than that of the Romans. Genseric expelled the bishops from their sees, and in case of resistance, he made them slaves for life. Some bishops, who still remained in the provinces, appeared before him, to entreat that since they had lost their churches and all their property, they might, at least, be permitted to remain to comfort and support the people of God. The tyrant told them he had resolved to leave none of their name and nation, and was with difficulty withheld, by the entreaties of those about him, from ordering them to be thrown into the sea. An orthodox bishop was, however, tolerated in Carthage, after a long interval<sup>1</sup>; and we find Deogratias, who was then elected, in a condition to redeem the captives whom the Vandals had brought to Africa when they sacked the city of Rome. Genseric afterwards ordered the church to be shut up, and banished the ministers. The Arian Vandals seem to have been the most violent persecutors of all the barbarians, though most of the others were pagans.

Huneric, the successor of Genseric, began his reign<sup>2</sup> with an indulgence to the orthodox. Eugenius was ordained bishop, and though the Arians were in possession of the revenues of the church, the daily contributions of the people enabled him to dispense that charity to the poor which was one of the characteristics of a primitive bishop. But Huneric soon shewed the ferocity of his disposition, and commenced a systematic persecution, without distinction of age, rank, or sex, when all the cruel and indecent scenes of an ancient heathen persecution were again witnessed. Nearly five thousand, in one company, were banished into the deserts, and suffered every species of wretchedness. We have one presumptive evidence that all these sufferers were truly faithful—that they might have avoided all that they endured, by Arian conformity. Cirila, the Arian bishop, assisted in these cruelties. Four hundred and forty-six bishops are mentioned as having perished, been banished, or having escaped from their persecutors. Among the latter was Vigilus, to whom we are indebted for that most excellent summary of the Trinitarian faith, for which he and his companions in tribulation were then suffering, the Athanasian Creed. The

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 454.

<sup>2</sup> A.D. 477.

persecution still raged among the people thus deprived of their pastors, and many were found faithful. Thus the remnant in Africa were tried and purified in the furnace of affliction<sup>1</sup>.

After a horrible reign of seven years and ten months, in which

<sup>1</sup> I copy the following from Mr. Milner :—

“ At Typasa, the secretary of Cirila was ordained bishop by the Arians. The inhabitants, seeing this, transported themselves into Spain, as the distance was but small: some, who could meet with no vessels, remained in Africa. The Arian bishop laboured by courtesy to win their favour; but they, in contempt of his ministry, assembled themselves in a private house for public worship. Huneric, hearing of this, by a message from the bishop, ordered their tongues to be cut out, and their right hands to be cut off, in the public market-place. He seems to have permitted them to retire to Constantinople, but to have been determined to prevent their open confession of the Trinity. Shall I, in compliance with modern prejudices, throw a veil over the rest, or shall I proceed according to historical veracity?” —“ A miracle followed, worthy of God, whose majesty had been daringly insulted, and which must, at that time, have much strengthened the hearts of the faithful, who needed, indeed, some particular consolations amidst such scenes of horrible persecution. The miracle itself is so well attested, that I see not how it can be more so. The reader shall have both the fact and the proof. Though their tongues were cut out to the roots, they speak as well as before. ‘ If any one doubt the fact,’ says Victor of Vita, ‘ let him go to Constantinople, where he will find a subdeacon called Reparatus, one who was thus treated, who speaks plainly, and has a particular respect shewn him in the palace of the emperor Zeno, especially by the empress.’ Æneas of Gaza, a Platonic philosopher, a cautious and prudent person<sup>1</sup>, was at that time at Constantinople, and writes thus, in the conclusion of his dialogue on the resurrection: ‘ I myself saw them, heard them speak, and wondered that their utterance could be so articulate. I searched for the organ of speech, and not trusting my ears, was resolved to have the proof of the eyes. Causing them to open their mouths, I saw that their tongues were plucked out even by the roots, and was even then more surprised that they could live, than that they could speak.’ Is this evidence sufficient? Hear more: Procopius, the historian, in his history of the Vandalic war, says, Huneric ordered the tongues of many to be cut out, who were afterwards seen in the streets of Constantinople, while I was there, talking without impediment, nor feeling any inconvenience from what they suffered. Count Marcellinus, in his *Chronicons*, says, ‘ I have seen some of this company of faithful confessors at Constantinople, who had their tongues cut out, but speak, nevertheless, without any imperfection in their utterance.’ To name only one more witness: the great emperor Justinian, in a constitution published by him for Africa, after it had fallen into his dominions, testifies that he had beheld the same<sup>2</sup>.”

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<sup>1</sup> “ Gibbon (*Decline, &c. of the Rom. Emp.* vol. iii. c. 38,) is struck with this evidence, in conjunction with that of the rest, yet he intimates that the infidel’s suspicion is incurable. Does he allude to himself? To what purpose does he say so, if he does not? If he does, what is this but to deny all reasonable evidence, and to confess himself to be unreasonable?” —MILNER’S *Note*.

<sup>2</sup> Milner, vol. ii. p. 505.

time the church was purged by as severe a persecution as was ever known, the tyrant Huneric<sup>1</sup> died of a disease in which he was corroded with worms—a signal monument of Divine justice. Gontamond, his nephew and successor, stopped the persecution, and recalled Eugenius to Carthage.

The superior importance of the ministry of Augustin called our first attention to the affairs of the church in Africa; we may now proceed with the history of the Western church in Europe. We have already seen evident marks of the growing importance of the Roman bishops, in the eyes of the Christian world; the notion of Peter, the apostle, speaking in them, begins to discover itself. It appears, however, from the story of Victorinus, in Augustin's confessions, that almost all the Roman nobility were at this time addicted to the ancient pagan idolatry, so that the chief importance of the bishop must have rested on a popular interest. Damasus was in possession of the see, when Honorius succeeded his father Theodosius in the West. He continued bishop eighteen years, Syricius fifteen, Anastatius three; when Innocent succeeded, who appears in the correspondence of Augustin. He is stigmatised as the bishop who drove the Novatians out of Rome, and deprived them of many churches<sup>2</sup>. It was in his incumbency, that Alaric, with his Goths, took the city of Rome, when all was confounded in one common scene of pillage, cruelty, and licentious fury; when what is in man, is horribly made known. The pagan barbarians, however, so far respected the "religion of the place," that all who fled to the church called the Basilicæ of the Apostles, whether Christians or not, were preserved from military fury<sup>3</sup>?

After Innocent, Sozimus governed the church of Rome two years, Boniface three years, to whom Celestine succeeded. He continued the persecution against the Novatians which Innocent had begun, and deprived them of all their churches, so that they were compelled to meet privately for public worship. They had till this time, Socrates informs us, enjoyed many churches, where great congregations assembled; but they now became, on what account he does not tell us, the objects of great public odium; "whereas the bishop of Rome, like the bishop of Alexandria, passing the bounds of his priestly order, presumed now to challenge to himself secular power and authority. Therefore these bishops would no longer suffer these Novatians, though they commended their constancy in the faith, to assemble un-

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 415.<sup>2</sup> Socrates, vii. 9.<sup>3</sup> Confessions.

molested in their churches." Celestine appears to more advantage in the part which he took against the Pelagian heresies, where he combats heresy by maintaining the truth.

In 441, he published articles of faith, fully corroborating the system of Divine grace, as taught by Augustin, Prosper, and Hilary. "In these articles it is acknowledged that all men are by nature under the power of sin, by reason of the Fall, from which nothing but grace can deliver any man;" — "that man is not good of himself, but needs a communication of God to him from God himself; nor can a man, though renewed, overcome the flesh and the devil, except he receive daily assistance;" — "that God so worketh upon the hearts of men, that holy thoughts, pious intentions, and the least motion towards a good inclination proceed from God." He uses the same argument with Augustin, from the prayers of the church: "We learn also what we are to believe, from the prayers appointed by the apostles throughout the world, and observed, with uniformity, by the whole church; wherein it is petitioned, that faith may be granted to infidels, idolaters, Jews, and heretics; charity to schismatics; repentance to sinners; and regeneration to catechumens." We see, however, in these articles, how easily a door is open to self-righteousness, and all its consequences, in the scheme of salvation by "inherent righteousness," though acknowledged to be all of special grace; — we see, in short, the importance of the clear statement of "justification by faith alone, for the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." "We must confess," continues the bishop, "that the grace of God prevents the merits of man; that it doth not take away free-will, but delivers, enlightens, rectifies, and heals it. God is willing, such is his goodness, *that his gifts should be our merits, and grants an eternal reward to them*: he works in us to will and to do according to his pleasure; but his gifts are not idle in us; we co-operate with his grace; and if we find remissness proceeding from our weakness, we immediately have recourse to him<sup>1</sup>."

But the greatest of the Roman bishops of this age<sup>2</sup>, was Leo<sup>3</sup>, who widely extended the authority of his see. The importance of his character is seen in the success of his deputation from the Western emperor, to divert Attila, the king of the Huns, from his projected invasion of Italy. Two years afterwards<sup>4</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> Fleury — Milner.

<sup>2</sup> Socrates, lib. vii. cap. 11.

<sup>3</sup> A. D. 440.

<sup>4</sup> A. D. 442.

we find him not altogether an unsuccessful mediator with the terrible Genseric, when the city of Rome was in his hands. Both in the East and in the West, we see Leo the powerful supporter of the ancient faith and ecclesiastical discipline; but with new and more extensive claims of dominion for his see, now called, in an exclusive sense, "the Apostolic See."

His letters, read in the council of Chalcedon, speak the language of the purest times of the ancient church, respecting the Redeemer's person sacrificed for us: "It was to pay the ransom of our nature that the godhead was joined with a nature capable of suffering, that one and the same Mediator of God and man, the man Christ Jesus, might die in one nature and not in another, THE HEALING MEDICINE which our wounds and griefs required." But the style assumed by his legates in the council plainly discovers how rapidly the authority of the Roman see was advancing, and what a different construction is now put upon the famous text, "Thou art Peter," &c., from what was understood to be its meaning in the days of Cyprian: "Leo, the most holy archbishop of great and old Rome, by us and this sacred assembly, together with the most blessed apostle St. Peter, who is the rock, the ground of the catholic church, and the foundation of the true faith, &c." Nor does this seem to be altogether a claim disallowed, for we read among the exclamations of the council: "Peter, in the person of Leo, said thus! Thus have the apostles taught, Leo has religiously and truly taught thus!"

In the West, Mr. Milner observes, "he opposed Pelagianism with great zeal; he detected the evasions of its defenders, who made grace the effect of human merits; and he resolved every thing into the grace of God, in so fall and clear a manner, that, if his own heart was influenced by the sentiments which he espoused, he must have been a humble, holy Christian." "He took much pains concerning matters of discipline; so far as appears, he supported the cause of truth and uprightness in general, though with a constant attention to the amplification of the Roman see."

An appellat jurisdiction, over the causes of bishops deposed or censured in provincial synods, had been granted, if we believe the fact, by the canons of a very early council, that of Sardica in 347, so far as to permit the bishop of Rome — or perhaps the bishops of Rome and Italy — to order a revision of the process, but not to annul the sentence. Valentinian III., influenced by

Leo, had gone a great deal farther, and established an almost absolute judicial supremacy in the holy see<sup>1</sup>.

The decrees of Leo shew the state of church government in that age. "Those who have not been chosen by the clergy, nor desired by the people, nor ordained by the bishops of the province, with the consent of the metropolitan, are not to be accounted bishops." "He ought to be chosen bishop, who is chosen by the clergy and people. In case their judgment be divided, the metropolitan should prefer him who is of greatest worth and has most votes. But no man should be appointed bishop whom the people refuse."

In Gaul, now overrun by the Franks and other barbarians, the church was reduced to a low state. The bounty of Sidonius, bishop of Clermont, in Auvergne, is much celebrated, as having mitigated the sufferings of these dreadful times; and also that of his brother-in-law, Ecdicius, who, when the Goths ravaged the country, and produced by their devastations a grievous famine, collected four thousand persons, and lodged and supported them during all the time of the famine. Patiens, bishop of Lyons, is also celebrated for the same charities, made so necessary by the distresses of the times. He converted many of the Burgundians to the truth, and was much respected by their king, who resided at Lyons. In these charities, and in the redeeming of captives, the truly religious of the age, who had it in their power, were distinguished. Epiphanius, bishop of Pavia, and Victor, bishop of Turin, were employed in Gaul on this errand by the Gothic king of Italy<sup>2</sup>, and returned with troops of redeemed captives. We frequently find Christian bishops possessed of sufficient weight, in these sad times, to be successful advocates for mercy and lenity, with the barbarian monarchs, who had begun to erect new states out of the empire..

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 455. Some bishops belonging to the province of Hilary, metropolitan of Arles, appealed from his sentence to Leo, who not only entertained their appeal, but presumed to depose Hilary. This assumption of power would have had little effect, if it had not been seconded by the emperor, in very unguarded language: "We decree that neither by the bishops of Gaul, nor of the other provinces, any thing should be taken in hand contrary to the ancient custom, without the venerable pope of the eternal city; but whatever the authority of the apostolic see shall sanction, is to be a law to them all." The same emperor enacted, that any bishop who refused to attend the tribunal of the pope, when summoned, should be compelled by the governor of his province. — HALLAM'S *History of the Middle Ages*, vol. ii. p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> A.D. 494.



The Franks, or French, a German nation who dwelt on the lower Rhine, having passed that river, had entered Gaul under Pharamond their king, about A.D. 420. Clodio, Merovæus, Childeric, and Clovis, reigned in succession after him. Clovis ruined the Roman power entirely in Gaul; and, after many bloody contests with other barbarian nations, founded the French monarchy. He had married Clotilda, niece of the Burgundian king, who, though her family were Arian, professed the true faith. She was the means of bringing over her pagan husband and his people<sup>1</sup> to at least the nominal profession of Christianity. The king himself, his sister, and three thousand of his army, were baptised by the bishop of Rheims, having been much influenced, it is to be feared, by the pretended miracles and lying wonders which he seemed in their eyes to perform<sup>2</sup>.

In the year 487, a council was held at Rome, with Felix, the bishop, at its head, in which were forty bishops of Italy, four of Africa, and seventy-six priests. The rules of penance prescribed in this synod, partook partly of the prevailing superstitions, and partly of the primitive strictness of discipline. Clergymen, who had yielded to be rebaptised by the Arian persecutors, were deprived, not only of their office, but even of lay communion, till their death. No clergyman was to receive into his city the penitent of another, without a written certificate from the bishop.

Gelasius, bishop of Rome, ordained<sup>3</sup> “that no illiterate person shall be advanced above the office of doorkeeper.” He forbids Christians to practise the superstitions of the Lupercalia. “I doubt not,” he says, “that my predecessors solicited the emperors to abolish this abuse; they were not heard, and this ruined the empire.” He appears to have been a pious man<sup>4</sup>.

In the Peninsula, the church every where suffered under the triumphant barbarians. The account of a council held at Braga, in Lusitania, throws great light upon its situation and the history of the times. The bishop Pancratian, its president, is represented as thus addressing the council: “Ye see, brethren, the havoc made by the barbarians. Brethren, let our care be

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 496.

<sup>2</sup> Gregory of Tours, after relating a most atrocious story of Clovis, the murder of a prince whom he had previously instigated to parricide, continues the sentence; “for God daily subdued his enemies to his hand, and increased his kingdom: because he walked before him in uprightness, and did what was pleasing in his eyes.” So wretched a specimen of barbarian conversion is this account of the first royal convert,—“the eldest son of the Romish church!”

<sup>3</sup> A.D. 496.

<sup>4</sup> Fleury — Milner.



for the salvation of souls, fearing lest the miseries of the times should seduce our flocks into the way of sinners; and therefore, let us give them an example of suffering in our own persons, for Jesus Christ, who suffered so much for us; and as some of the barbarians are Arians and others idolaters, let us confess our faith." He then declares, in a few words, the articles of the Christian confession, to which they all assented. Elipand, of Conimbra, observes: "The barbarians are among us! they besiege Lisbon, in a little time they will be upon us! Let every one go to his abode: let him comfort the faithful, decently conceal the bodies of the saints, and send us an account of the caves where they are deposited." All the bishops having approved of the motion, Pancratian added, "Go home in peace, except brother Potamius, because his church is destroyed, and his country ravaged." Potamius answered, "I did not receive the episcopal function to sit at my ease, but to labour; let me comfort my flock, and suffer with them, for Jesus Christ." A little after the council, the bishop of Porto wrote to a friend: "I pity you, my brother—may God look on our misery with the eyes of his mercy. Conimbra is taken—the servants of God are fallen by the edge of the sword—Elipand is carried away captive—Lisbon has redeemed itself with gold—Igædita is besieged—nothing is seen but misery, groaning, and anguish. You have seen what the Suevi have done in Gallicia, judge what the Alani are doing in Lusitania. I send you the decrees of the faith you ask for—I will send you all, if I discover the place where you are hidden. I expect the same fate daily. The Lord have mercy on us<sup>1</sup>!"

In Britain the pagan Saxons were pursuing their successes against the inhabitants; and wherever they prevailed, the Christians were either reduced to slavery, or compelled to retire to the most inaccessible and remote parts of the island. We have seen that Pelagianism had its rise in this part of the empire, and it seems to have made some impression in Britain. We read of two bishops of Gaul<sup>2</sup>, Germanus, of Auxerre, and Lupus, of Troyes, going on a mission to reclaim the heretics. They preached not only in the churches, but also in the highways, and in the open country; and vast crowds attended their ministry. Pelagianism was checked. Germanus himself led with success the natives against their enemies the Picts, after he had baptised numbers in a church which they had erected of boughs of trees

<sup>1</sup> Fleury.<sup>2</sup> A.D. 400.

twisted together. The deacon Palladius was ordained by them a bishop for Scotland : he was the first of that order that visited that country, then in a state of extreme barbarity. Germanus was a second time<sup>1</sup> called into Britain on the same cause, to oppose the Pelagians, which he did with the same success, and maintained the British church firm to the ancient faith.

The famous Patrick was in this age the instrument of converting the pagans in Ireland. He was born near Dunbarton, in Scotland, and had, in his youth, been carried away captive into Ireland, where he remained some years, and had acquired the language of the country. He was afterwards conveyed to Gaul by some pirates, and after various adventures returned to Ireland with the view of converting the natives, who, till this period, had hardly any acquaintance with Christianity. His first efforts were unsuccessful, and he retired to Germanus of Auxerre, and by his advice, went to Celestine, bishop of Rome. Encouraged by his authority, he again returned to Ireland, and, for a long period<sup>2</sup>, laboured with great success. “ His disciples appear to have inherited the spirit of their teacher : churches and monasteries were successively founded, and every species of learning, known at the time, assiduously cultivated. It was the peculiar happiness of these ecclesiastics to escape the visits of the barbarians, who, in the fifth and sixth centuries, depopulated and dismembered the Western empire. When science was almost extinguished on the Continent, it still emitted a faint light from the remote shores of Erin : strangers from Britain, Gaul, and Germany, resorted to the Irish schools, and Irish missionaries established monasteries and imparted instruction on the banks of the Danube, and amid the snows of the Apennines<sup>3</sup>. ”

Even to the end of this century of desolation, and in the former part of the following, we find some records, though but scanty, that there was still a faithful people of Christ and pious and laborious pastors, among the Roman provincials in Gaul, and in Spain, and among the dispersed Britons. Cæsarius<sup>4</sup>, bishop of Arles, though he suffered much himself in the confusion of the times, was greatly distinguished by his deeds of charity, his constant preaching, and his care of the churches. When hindered from preaching, he caused a sermon of his own, of Augustin, or of Ambrose, to be read by a minister. He exhorted his people not to be “ content with hearing the Scriptures read

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 446.

<sup>2</sup> From A.D. 432 to 493.

<sup>3</sup> Lingard's Hist. Brit. vol. xi. p. 93.

<sup>4</sup> Died A.D. 542.

in the church, but to read them also at home." Finding the laity accustomed to talk in the church while the clergy were singing, he induced them to join in psalmody; and, in a sermon extant, exhorts them to sing with their hearts as well as with their voices.

The negligent people, as well as the zealous pastor, bearing up against the evils of the day, is plainly seen in what follows: "Observing some persons going out of church to avoid hearing the sermon, he cried with a loud voice, 'Where are you going, my children? stay, stay, for the good of your souls! At the day of judgment it will be too late to exhort you.' He was often obliged to cause the church-doors to be shut, after the gospel was read, to prevent the indecent practice." He had presided in a council at Arles, where twenty-four bishops were assembled. The origin of benefices is traced to this council. The ancient rule was, the appointment of a salary for the officiating minister; by a canon of this council, it is permitted that, "with the bishop's leave, the clergyman may appropriate to himself the revenues of the church, saving its rights," &c. "Oratories are allowed in the country to those who live at a great distance from the parish churches, but they must attend the parish church on certain festivals;" and what strongly marks the decay of Christian zeal, "all such laymen as shall not receive the communion three times a year, shall be looked on as heathens." How had things altered from the days of Cyprian, when Christians, in the use of the Lord's prayer, might be supposed to petition for the daily bread of the Eucharist!

Cæsarius had presided also at a council held at Orange<sup>1</sup>, the decrees of which form a noble testimony to the grace of the Gospel, at the same time that they mark the existence of Semi-Pelagianism, which they are intended to oppose. "Adam's sin did not only hurt the body but the soul: it descended to posterity. The grace of God is not given to men because they call upon him, but that grace is the cause that men do call upon him. The being cleansed from sin, and the beginning of our faith, is not owing to ourselves, but to grace. We are not able by our own natural strength to do or think any thing which may conduce to our salvation." — "If any one say that the beginning or increase of faith, and the very affection of belief is in us, not by the gift of grace, that is, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit correcting our will from infidelity to faith, from impiety to piety,

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 529.

but by nature, he is an enemy to the doctrine of the apostles.” “ If any man affirm that he can, by the vigour of nature, think any thing good which pertains to salvation as he ought, or choose, or consent to the saving, that is, to evangelical preaching, without the illumination and inspiration of the Holy Ghost, who gives to all the sweet relish in consenting to and believing the truth, he is deceived by an heretical spirit.”

Among the Britons who had retired before the arms of the Anglo-Saxons, and had peopled the French province from them called Brittany, the faith of the Gospel seems to have been preserved. Sampson, originally a Welchman, bishop of Dol, was renowned for his piety and learning<sup>1</sup>: he had been educated in his native country by Heltut, said to have been a disciple of Germanus of Auxerre. Malo and other British bishops are celebrated for their labours and piety in Brittany. Gildas, another disciple of Heltut, who had before preached with success in his native country Scotland, and in Ireland, also joined the refugees in Brittany, and built the monastery of Buis. Two of his discourses, on the ruin of Great Britain, are still extant, in which he deploras the vices and calamities of the times; and, ascribing the desolations made by the Saxons to the depravity of his countrymen, he, with honest vehemence, exhorts six British princes to repentance. He addresses with much spirit the clergy of Great Britain, and rebukes them for their ignorance, avarice, and simony; and speaking of the exceptions in the general corruption, Gildas complains, “ that they were so exceeding few among the Britons, in comparison of the other, that their mother the church, in a manner, did not see *them lying in her lap, who were the only true sons she had*<sup>2</sup>.” Colomban, an Irish priest in this century, came over into the northern parts of Scotland, and laboured with success for more than thirty years among the Picts. His disciples were remarkable for the sanctity and abstemiousness of their lives.

<sup>1</sup> Died A.D. 545.

<sup>2</sup> Gildas Epist.—Archbishop Usher.

**A**  
**SHORT HISTORY**  
**OF**  
**THE CHURCH OF CHRIST,**  
**ETC. ETC.**

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**PART THE SECOND.**

**THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST DURING THE  
DARK OR MIDDLE AGES, FROM THE SIXTH CENTURY  
INCLUSIVE TO THE BEGINNING OF THE SIXTEENTH  
CENTURY.**

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**INTRODUCTION.**

**THE** events of the last century had produced an entire change in the state of the civilised world. In the West, we have seen the Roman provinces converted into barbarian kingdoms; in some parts, the entire population exchanged; and every where the old inhabitants trampled beneath the feet of new masters, who had introduced new customs and manners. All was rude and barbaric in the governing part of mankind, and in such circumstances, we are not surprised that the vestiges of civilisation and of the improvements of cultivated society, which had been long in a declining state, even among the Romans themselves, should be gradually effaced among the rising generations of an oppressed and enslaved people. The barbarian invaders were indeed somewhat raised in the scale of civilisation, by their settlement in the empire, and by their intercourse with a more enlightened people; but the whole mass of society was greatly depressed and debased by the intermixture.

Learning, and the arts and sciences, and all that distinguishes man in an improved state of society from the inhabitants of the woods and forests, were in a manner lost and forgotten. The conquerors long despised them, as the marks of effeminacy. If a spark of the ancient light was still preserved in the churches and monastic institutions which survived the general deluge, universal darkness fast overspread the nations of Europe; and the churches and monasteries, replenished from the new generations of men, very soon found their level almost with the ignorant population around them. Knowledge and civilisation were certainly not progressive, but retrograde, for several centuries, and it was long before any visible improvement began to take place in social life among the Western nations. If this night had its evening and its morning, that for a time relieved, and after a period began to disperse its gloom, the ages that follow, for about ten centuries, have been with propriety denominated the dark ages.

The observations of Mr. Hallam are important. "Scarcely one of the barbarians, so long as they continued unconfused with the native inhabitants, acquired the slightest tincture of letters: and the praise of equal ignorance was soon aspired to and attained by the entire mass of the Roman laity. They, however, could hardly have divested themselves so completely of all acquaintance with even the elements of learning, if the language in which books were written had not ceased to be their natural tongue. This remarkable change in the speech of France, Spain, and Italy, all derived from one common source, the Latin, is most intimately connected with the extinction of learning." With respect to this island, whatever progress the language of the empire had once made, almost all traces of it were obliterated. "Latin," though much corrupted, "had not ceased to be a living language in Gaul during the seventh century. But in a council held at Tours in 813, the bishops are ordered to have certain homilies of the fathers translated into the rustic Roman as well as the German tongue." In Italy, few understood the Latin language, in the age of Charlemagne. It is said, in the epitaph of Pope Gregory V., who died in 900, "that he instructed the people in three dialects, the Frankish, the vulgar, and the Latin." The whole treasury of knowledge was now locked up from the people. The worst effect was, that as the newly-formed languages were hardly made use of in writing, Latin being still preserved in all legal instruments and public correspondence, the very use of letters, as well as of books, was

forgotten. "For many centuries it was rare for a layman, of whatever rank, to know how to sign his name." "Even the clergy were, for a long period, not very materially superior, as a body, to the uninstructed laity." "This universal ignorance was rendered unavoidable, among other causes, by the scarcity of books, which could only be procured at an immense price. From the conquest of Alexandria by the Saracens, at the beginning of the seventh century, when the Egyptian papyrus almost ceased to be imported into Europe, to the close of the tenth, about which time the art of making paper from linen rags seems to have been introduced, there were no materials for writing except parchment—a substance too expensive to be readily spared for mere purposes of literature." "If it be demanded by what cause it happened, that a few sparks of ancient learning survived throughout this long winter, we can only ascribe their preservation to the establishment of Christianity. Religion alone made a bridge, as it were, across the chaos, and linked the two periods of ancient and modern civilisation. Without this connecting principle, Europe might, indeed, have awakened to intellectual pursuits, and the genius of recent times needed not to be invigorated by the imitation of antiquity. But the memory of Greece and Rome would have been feebly preserved by tradition; and the monuments of these nations might have excited, on the return of civilisation, that vague sentiment of speculation and wonder with which men now contemplate Persepolis, or the pyramids."

The destiny of the Eastern empire, if it was not more happy, was somewhat different. On the African shores, and in the fairest provinces of Asia, religion, and every remain of Grecian or of Roman improvement, were totally destroyed by swarms of a new species of fanatics, which the too celebrated Mahomet, or Mohammed, had raised and organised in the deserts of Arabia. Constantinople, the seat of the Grecian emperor, was indeed, by a merciful dispensation of Providence, preserved during almost all this dark period, to be the depository of ancient knowledge and improvement, till Europe should again be in a state to receive and cultivate them with advantage. It were, indeed, to be wished, that we had documents sufficient to prove that, during this long period, the city of the Christian emperor was also the safe depository of true religion: it certainly was of the forms and institutions of Christianity, we may say, of the archives of the church; for not only her ancient history, but even the language of the New Testament itself, was almost lost and



forgotten in Europe. What history discloses concerning the state of religion in Constantinople and its dependencies, is the progress of corruption, more speedy and more entire than even in the West; but still there was probably, to the very last, a small remnant that worshipped God in spirit and in truth. This Christian kingdom, however, soon began to be cut short, by the devastation of a second race of Mahometans, the Othman Turks, who hemmed it in on all sides, and at last seized on its imperial capital.

In treating of the history of this long and barren period, it may be more for the advantage of the reader, to consider it together, as a connected whole, and to trace the several events, as they concern the history of religion, from beginning to end throughout the period, or the space they occupy therein, rather than to make distinct subjects of each separate century. These eras of time, indeed, so useful to measure the march of the more eventful periods of history, may now be more neglected, as the unobserved watches of the night. For what can be expected from the ecclesiastical historian, when the writer of general history, on entering upon this period, has to observe, that “many considerable portions of time” — “may justly be deemed so barren of events worthy of remembrance, that a single sentence or paragraph is often sufficient to give the character of entire generations, and of long dynasties of obscure kings<sup>1</sup>.”

In pursuing, therefore, the history of this long, dark period, I shall first notice the decay and almost extinction of the profession of the Christian religion in the East, catching, if I can, some glimpses of the departing day, for here no morning dawn has as yet appeared — unless, indeed, at this very moment, we see it spread upon the mountains of Greece. I shall next turn to the history of the European states, numbering *the ecclesiastical state* among them, for we want a new name for the fabric which is no longer the ground and pillar of the truth, but denies and persecutes it. The chief object, however, of this history all along, is, to record the evidences of the existence of true religion, whether we can shew them among the members of the Roman catholic community, or in the different sects which from time to time spring up; and our special regard will be demanded for any faithful witnesses whom the grace of God may raise up to maintain any part of the truth, or to testify to an apostate and idolatrous race, that they should turn from their abominations, to worship the living and true God.

<sup>1</sup> Hallam.

## CHAPTER THE FIRST.

## SECT. I.

## HISTORY OF THE GRECIAN EMPIRE, AND OF THE IMPERIAL GOVERNMENT.

THE fall of the imperial authority had, in fact, left the Roman empire, in its restricted sense, without a head ; but the successor of Cæsar and Augustus still reigned over Greece, Asia, and Egypt, and retained a nominal supremacy in Rome and Italy, which was to be revived again. “ After the fall of the Roman empire in the West,” says Mr. Gibbon, “ an interval of fifty years, till the memorable reign of Justinian<sup>1</sup>, is faintly marked by the obscure names and imperfect annals of Zeno, Anastasius, and Justin.” During the same period, Italy revived and flourished under the government of a Gothic king. Odoacer, the king of those barbarians distinguished by the name of Heruli, who had abolished the dignity of the Western emperor<sup>2</sup>, had been overpowered by the victorious arms of Theodoric<sup>3</sup>, king of the Ostrogoths. He had been educated as a royal hostage in the court of Constantinople. Zeno had assented to his invasion of Italy, and had given “ a tardy, reluctant, and ambiguous consent to his assumption of the regal title after his success.” “ It was left in doubt whether the conqueror of Italy should reign as the lieutenant, the vassal, or the ally of the emperor of the East.” But, in fact, hardly a nominal supremacy was reserved : the Romans received him as a deliverer, -- Italy enjoyed some rest from the ravages of war, and Theodoric maintained, with a powerful hand, the balance of the West, till it was overthrown by the ambition of Clovis.

After the death of Theodoric<sup>4</sup>, his daughter Amalasontha reigned as guardian of her son, Athalaric : and, in succession, Theodatus and Vitiges, when the victories of Belisarius recovered the possession of Rome<sup>5</sup> and Italy for the emperor Justinian. Ten years after, Rome was again wrested from the imperial generals, by the Gothic tribes united under Totila ; “ a third part of the walls were demolished by his command, fire

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 527.<sup>2</sup> A.D. 476.<sup>3</sup> A.D. 493.<sup>4</sup> A.D. 526.<sup>5</sup> A.D. 536.

and engines prepared to consume or subvert the most stately works of antiquity;—and the world was astonished by the fatal decree that Rome should be changed into a pasture for cattle.” “The firm and temperate remonstrance of Belisarius suspended the execution.” “The senators were dragged in the train of Totila, and afterwards confined in the fortresses of Campania; the citizens, with their wives and children, were dispersed in exile; and during forty days Rome was abandoned to desolate and dreary solitude. After the departure of Totila, Belisarius sallied from his station, cut in pieces those who opposed his progress, and visited with pity and reverence the vacant place of the Eternal City. Resolved to maintain a station so conspicuous in the eyes of mankind, he summoned the greatest part of his troops to the standard which he erected in the capitol; the old inhabitants were recalled by the love of their country and the hopes of food, and the keys of Rome sent a second time to the emperor Justinian.”

After the departure of Belisarius<sup>1</sup>, Rome again fell into the hand of Totila<sup>2</sup>; but after his defeat and death<sup>3</sup>, it was finally conquered by the eunuch Narses. “The fate of the senate,” observes Mr. Gibbon, “suggests an awful lesson of the vicissitude of human affairs. Of the senators whom Totila had banished from their country, some were rescued by an officer of Belisarius, and transported from Campania to Sicily, while others were too guilty to confide in the clemency of Justinian, or too poor to provide horses for their escape to the sea-shore. Their brethren languished five years in a state of indigence and exile. The victory of Narses revived their hopes, but their premature return to the metropolis was prevented by the furious Goths, and all the fortresses of Campania were stained with patrician blood. After a period of thirteen centuries, the institution of Romulus expired; and if the nobles of Rome still assumed the title of senators, few subsequent traces can be discovered of a public council or constitutional order.” “Ascend,” says Mr. Gibbon, “six hundred years, and contemplate the kings of the earth soliciting an audience, as the slaves or freedmen of the Roman senate.”

After the defeat and death of Teias<sup>4</sup>, the last king of the Goths, they retired or mingled with the people. The exarchs of Ravenna governed the whole of Italy in the name of the Eastern emperor, and a duke was stationed for the defence and military

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 549.      <sup>2</sup> Gibbon.      <sup>3</sup> A.D. 552.      <sup>4</sup> A.D. 563.

command of each of the principal cities. Thus was the imperial authority, which seemed to have been for ever extinguished by the sword of the Heruli and Ostrogoths, once more restored in the ancient capitol<sup>1</sup>.

The reign of Justinian forms a new era in the history of the Roman world, chiefly on account of his legislative enactments and his new modelling of the constitution of the empire. This afterwards supplied a pattern for the regulation both of the civil and ecclesiastical states in many of the nations of Europe, and, giving a similarity to their customs and laws, has held them together as by a common tie, while their different pertinency in retaining the traditions of their barbarian ancestors, has introduced a variety of national character. The restored and new regulated empire of Justinian, afforded, in an especial manner, a model for the future spiritual monarchy of papal Rome<sup>2</sup>.

Justinian recovered Africa as well as Italy to his dominions; and though he was most arbitrary and imperious in his government of the church, he much increased the external splendour of her establishment, and added many barbarian kings and nations to the Christian profession. In the erection of the magnificent church of St. Sophia, at Constantinople, which at this day supports the Turkish crescent, he vainly boasted that he had outdone Solomon. "But the triple scourge of war, pestilence, and famine, afflicted the subjects of Justinian; and his reign is disgraced by a visible decrease of the human species, which has never been repaired, in some of the fairest countries of the globe." In the latter part of the century, the peace of Italy was again disturbed by the invasion of the Lombards, who, following the steps of the Heruli and Ostrogoths, long impeded the reviving prosperity of the Roman state. "From the Trentine hills to the gates of Ravenna and Rome, the inland regions of Italy became, without a battle or a siege, the lasting patrimony of the Lombards. "The distress of the inhabitants of the Roman city was very great, and the court of Constantinople was too weak to render them any assistance." Gregory, bishop of Rome, informs the emperor, in his letter, "With these eyes have I seen Romans, like dogs, tied with cords, and dragged to be sold as slaves among the Franks."

The remaining history of the Eastern empire, and of those countries which first received the light of the Gospel, so far as

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps what is represented in prophecy, Rev. xiii. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Compare Rev. xiii. 14.

concerns the affairs of the church of Christ, is short and mournful indeed ; given up to destruction and wo, we hardly know that a remnant of faithful men was to be found in this part of the world. The Greek churches, it is universally agreed, were more depraved and more intolerant than even the churches of the West, and their still more severe judgment marks the avenging hand of Providence. The instrument of this chastisement, was the Arabian impostor Mohammed, who, in the desert of Arabia, was permitted to devise a wretched and diabolical superstition, which, in a few years, was to supplant the religion of Christ in Africa and in many parts of the East, and to bring the Christian empire of Constantinople to the lowest stage of depression<sup>1</sup>. Mohammed assumed the prophetic character in the year 609, or, according to some chronologists, 612. Implicit faith in the prophet of God, and a ferocious energy with which he inspired his followers, were the vital essence of his religion. Long fastings, pilgrimages, regular prayers, and ablutions, constant almsgiving, and abstinence from stimulating liquors, were to form the fictitious holiness of the believer. Death, slavery, or tribute, were the glad tidings of the Arabian prophet to unbelievers.

The first effect of the broaching of this false religion, was, the converting, and attaching to his cause, of the wandering tribes of Arabia. They formed a numerous host, ready to obey his commands, and, by the sword, to prepare the way for the instilling of the deadly poison of his doctrines. “ The people of Arabia, a race of strong passions and sanguinary tempers, inured to habits of pillage and murder, found, in the law of their native prophet, not a license, but a command, to desolate the world, and the promise of all that their glowing imaginations could anticipate of paradise, annexed to all in which they most delighted upon earth.

But though they were dreadful conquerors, it must be admitted that they were mild persecutors ; for the Christians whom they subdued were not compelled, by the penalty of death, to embrace their religion : by the payment of tribute, and other marks of humiliation and servitude, they were generally permitted to purchase the tolerance of their own faith and worship. The professors of the Christian faith, who had only a name to lose, were rather seduced to become proselytes to the doctrines of the false prophet, than compelled by violence ; but wherever

<sup>1</sup> Rev. ix. 1, &c.

their victorious arms introduced them, his followers scattered behind them the baleful poison of their accursed principles; so that, in almost all the countries which they subdued, the profession of Christianity drooped and died. "In the field of battle," observes Mr. Gibbon, "the forfeited lives of the prisoners were redeemed by the profession of Islamism; the females were bound to embrace the religion of their masters, and a race of sincere proselytes was gradually multiplied by the education of the infant captives. But the millions of Asiatic and African converts, who swelled the native bands of the faithful Arabs, must have been allured rather than constrained, to declare their belief in one God and the apostle of God." Mecca submitted to the Prophet in the year 629; the conquest of all Arabia followed. "His lieutenants on the shores of the Red Sea, the Ocean, and the Gulf of Persia, were saluted by the acclamations of a faithful people; and the ambassadors who knelt before the throne of Medina, were as numerous, says the Arabian proverb, as the dates that fall from the maturity of the palm-tree." Fourteen thousand Moslems accompanied the Prophet in his last pilgrimage<sup>1</sup>. His successors, since so famous under the title of Caliphs, in twenty years made a complete conquest of Persia; at the same time they attacked the Eastern empire.

In the year the Prophet died Syria was invaded. In the caliph's instructions to his troops, it is ordered; "When you fight the battles of the Lord, acquit yourselves like men, without turning your backs; but let not your victory be stained with the blood of women or children. Destroy no palm-trees, nor burn any fields of corn; cut down no fruit-trees, nor do any mischief to cattle, only such as you kill to eat. When you make any article or covenant, stand to it, and be as good as your word. As you go on you will find some religious persons who live retired in monasteries, and propose to themselves to serve God that way; let them alone, neither kill them nor destroy their monasteries: and you will find another sort of people that belong to the synagogue of Satan, who have shaven crowns; be sure you cleave their skulls, and give them no quarter till they turn Mahometans or pay tribute." It should seem that the solitary monks of the Desert were spared. May we conclude from this, that there was still a faithful remnant among them, whom Divine Providence suffered not to be extinguished?

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 632.

In the year 634, Damascus was taken, but 20,000 Christians were still left in it, subject to tribute. Three years afterwards, Jerusalem fell; and the following year, the city that had contained the mother church of the Gentiles, Antioch, was subdued. At the same time the conquest of Egypt followed: the Copts and Jacobites voluntarily submitted; the Greeks of Egypt, whose numbers could scarcely equal a tenth part of the natives, were overwhelmed by the universal defection: they had ever been hated; they were no longer feared. Alexandria fell soon afterwards. The Arabian swarm next spread along the northern coast of Africa: Carthage fell into their hands A.D. 692; and, at the commencement of the eighth century, they had penetrated to the verge of the Atlantic, and erected the splendid capitals of Fez and Morocco. In the year 710, they made a descent upon Spain: the ruin of the Gothic monarchy followed; “the most zealous of the Catholics had escaped with the relics of their saints.” But in Toledo, seven churches were still appropriated to the worship of the Christians, and the toleration of their religion was every where granted on the payment of the tribute; yet the light of the Gospel was totally extinguished in Africa, and but little information remains of the tributaries in Spain.

At the beginning of the eighth century, the caliphs were the most potent and absolute monarchs of the globe. The Arabian empire extended two hundred days’ journey from east to west, from the confines of India and Tartary, to the shores of the Atlantic; and if we retrench “the sleeve of the robe,” as it is styled by their writers—the long and narrow province of Africa—the solid and compact dominion from Fargana to Aden, from Tarsus to Surat, will spread on every side to the measure of four or five months of the march of a caravan. The Saracens twice appeared in arms before Constantinople; but the destruction of this Christian metropolis was reserved for a second and still more formidable set of Mahometans. In France, their progress was stopped by Charles Martel, the master of the French monarchy in the year 732; and the erection of their new capital, Bagdad—the city of peace—in the year 762, a hundred and fifty years after Mohammed had begun his destructive career, seems to mark the period of their most troublesome inroads on their neighbours.

“The outline of Saracenic history,” observes Mr. Hallam, for three centuries after Mohammed, is marked “by one age of glorious conquest; a second of stationary, but rather pre-



various greatness; a third of rapid decline. The Greek empire meanwhile survived, and almost recovered from the shock it had sustained." "The position of Constantinople, chosen with a sagacity to which the course of events almost gave the appearance of prescience, secured her from any immediate danger on the side of Asia, and rendered her as little accessible to an enemy, as any city which valour and patriotism did not protect. Yet, in the days of Arabian energy, she was twice attacked by great naval armaments; the first siege, or rather blockade, continued for seven years; the second, though shorter, was more terrible, and her walls as well as her ports were actually invested." "The final discomfiture of these assailants shewed the resisting force of the empire, or rather of its capital; but perhaps the abandonment of such maritime enterprises by the Saracens may be, in some measure, ascribed to the removal of their metropolis from Damascus to Bagdad. The Greeks, in their turn, determined to dispute the command of the sea. By possessing the secret of an inextinguishable fire, they fought on superior terms: their wealth, perhaps their skill, enabled them to employ larger and better appointed vessels; and they ultimately expelled their enemies from the islands of Crete and Cyprus."

"The history of the Byzantine government is but the history of crimes and revolutions. The Greek empire stood in the middle of the tenth century—as vicious indeed and cowardly, but more wealthy—more enlightened, and far more secure from its enemies, than at the commencement of this period<sup>1</sup>." Phocas and Zimisces recovered Antioch and Damascus<sup>2</sup>, and extended the boundaries of the empire beyond the Euphrates. "At the close of the tenth century, the emperors of Constantinople possessed the best and greatest portion of the modern kingdom of Naples, a part of Sicily, the whole European dominions of the Ottomans, the province of Anatolia, or Asia Minor, with some part of Syria and Armenia."

But although the fate of Constantinople was thus deferred for many years, the scourge was preparing that was to inflict the last judgment upon her; and, by the application of a more tremendous instrument of destruction than the Greek fire which had saved her, was to reduce her towers, and lead her into a long captivity<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 963.

<sup>2</sup> A.D. 975.

<sup>3</sup> Foretold in the imagery of the Sixth Trumpet, Rev. ix. 14, &c.

About the middle of the sixth century, Mr. Gibbon observes, “ In the midst of these obscure calamities, Europe felt the shock of a revolution which first revealed to the world the name and nation of the Turks. Issuing from the mountains of Imaus, they had established a powerful empire. As the abject nations marched under the standard of the Turks, their cavalry was proudly computed by millions.” “ One of their effective armies consisted of 400,000 soldiers; and in less than fifty years they were connected in peace and war with the Romans, the Persians, and the Chinese.” “ The Scythian empire of the sixth century was long since dissolved, but the name of the Turks was still famous among the Greeks and Orientals; and the fragments of the nation, each a powerful and independent people, were scattered over the desert, from China to the Oxus and the Danube.” “ A swarm of these northern shepherds overspread the kingdom of Persia: their princes, of the race of Seljuk, created a splendid and solid empire from Samarcand to the confines of Greece and Egypt; and the Turks maintained their dominions in Asia Minor, till the victorious crescent was planted on the dome of St. Sophia.”

“ Twenty-five years after the death of Basil, his successors were suddenly assaulted by an unknown race of barbarians, who united the Scythian valour with the fanaticism of new converts, and the arts and riches of a powerful monarchy;” — for, like the barbarians who invaded Europe, they had embraced the religion of the nations which they had subdued; and Mahometanism, after the decay of the power which it had created, was destined, by a power, not originally its own, to obtain a dominion as extensive as its first empire, and far more permanent. On this occasion, the historian remarks, “ the myriads of Turkish horse overspread a frontier of six hundred miles, from Taurus to Arzeroum;” that is, where the Euphrates forms the borders of Cappadocia and Pontus; “ and the blood of a hundred and thirty thousand was a grateful sacrifice to the Arabian prophet.” Their armies, however, made at this time no lasting impression upon the countries on this side of the river.

The crusades of the Christians, for the recovery of the Holy Land, is also considered as one cause that impeded the progress of the Turks, and for a time suspended the fall of Constantinople. This city paid dearly, however, for the assistance afforded her, being seized by them, and, for nearly sixty years<sup>1</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 1202 to 1261.

governed by Latin emperors—a blow which she never recovered. “The populousness of Constantinople at this time,” says Mr. Hallam, “is estimated beyond credibility; ten, twenty, thirty-fold that of London or Paris<sup>1</sup>; certainly far beyond the united capitals of all European kingdoms in that age. Her magnificence was more excelling than her numbers; for the thatched roofs, the mud walls, the narrow streets, the pitiful buildings of those cities, she had marble and gilded palaces, churches and monasteries, the works of skilful architects in nine centuries, gradually sliding from the severity of ancient taste into the more various and brilliant combinations of Eastern fancy.”

The historian notices, that in the year 1062 or 1063, “Alp-Arslan—or the Valiant Lion—passed the Euphrates at the head of the Turkish cavalry, and entered Cesarea.” In the years 1065—1068, they penetrated into Phrygia, but were driven back beyond the Euphrates by the emperor Romanus. The Romans were again defeated by Alp-Arslan in the year 1071. “On this fatal day,” the historian observes, “the Asiatic provinces were irretrievably lost.” It does not, however, appear that they extorted, at this time, any city or province from the empire; and after this event the Turkish empire was much weakened by a civil war, which ended in a lasting separation into four dynasties, Persia, Kerman, Syria, and Roum. It appears that the dynasty of Roum effected the conquest of Asia Minor, between the years 1074 and 1084. “Soliman, with his four brothers, passed the Euphrates; the Turkish camp was soon seated in the neighbourhood of Kutaieh in Phrygia; and his flying cavalry laid waste all the country as far as the Hellespont.” This invasion, however, was not conducted by those Turks who were destined to destroy all remains of the Roman empire in the East; the power of these Turks was broken by the conquests of Zingis and the Moguls.

But shortly afterwards we find the Ottoman Turks passing the same river, so celebrated in Turkish invasions, and passing it to return no more to their former boundaries. “Soliman Shah was drowned in the passage of the Euphrates; his son Orthogrul became the soldier and subject of Aladin, sultan of Iconium, and established at Surgut, on the banks of the Sangar, a camp of four hundred families or tents, whom he governed fifty-two years. He was the father of Othman, who, in the year 1299, first invaded the territory of Nicomedia, though the

<sup>1</sup> “We should probably rate London in 1204 too high at 40,000.”—HALLAM.

first recorded conquest of these Turks over the Greeks, was that of the famous city of Kutahi, in the year 1281 : the growth of the monster from this period was rapid and destructive. In 1300, Anatolia was divided among the Turkish emirs—in 1312, the captivity or ruin of the seven churches of Asia was completed.” Orchan, who succeeded in the year 1326, conquered Bithynia. In 1353, the Turks passed over into Europe, and there gained a settlement. Amurath I. fixed the seat of his government at Adrianople ; he reigned from 1360 to 1389. Bajazet reigned till 1403, and extended his conquests from the Euphrates to the Danube. The arm of the Turks was arrested by the conquest of a more powerful barbarian, Timour ; but their empire was again restored, under Mahomet I., in 1421. To him Amurath II. succeeded, who was followed by Mahomet II., 1451. By the arms of this sovereign Constantinople fell. “ Among the instruments of destruction, he studied, with peculiar care, the recent and tremendous discovery of the Latins ; and his artillery surpassed whatever had yet appeared in the world.” “ This thundering artillery,” pointed against the walls and towers which had been erected only to resist the “ less potent engines of antiquity,” gave a great advantage to the assailant, and the city was taken by assault, May 29, 1453<sup>1</sup>.

The concluding remarks of Mr. Hallam are — “ The two monarchies which have successively held their seat in the city of Constantine, may be contrasted in the circumstances of their decline. In the present day we anticipate, with an assurance that none can deem extravagant, the approaching subversion of the Ottoman power ; but the signs of internal weakness have not yet been confirmed by the dismemberment of provinces ; and the arch of dominion, that long since has seemed nodding to its fall, and totters at every blast of the North, still rests upon the landmarks of ancient conquests, and spans the ample regions from Bagdad to Belgrade. Far different were the events that preceded the dissolution of the Greek empire. Every province was in turn subdued ; every city opened her gates to the conqueror ; the limbs were lopped off one by one, but the pulse still beat at the heart, and the majesty of the Roman name was ultimately confined to the walls of Constantinople.” Before Mahomet II. planted his cannon against them, he had completed every smaller conquest, and deprived the existing empire of every hope of succour or delay. “ Though the fate of

<sup>1</sup> Gibbon.

Constantinople had been protracted beyond all reasonable expectation, the actual intelligence operated like that of sudden calamity ; a sentiment of consternation, perhaps of self-reproach, thrilled to the heart of Christendom."

But what say the divine oracles on this occasion? " And the rest of men who were not killed by these plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils—demons—and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood ; which neither hear, nor see, nor walk ; neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their theft<sup>1</sup>."

## SECT. II.

### OF THE REMNANT OF THE EASTERN CHURCHES.

The state of religion under the imperial sway, and among the remains of the Romans in Africa and the West, appears to have declined greatly. Formality and superstition were greatly increased, and with them, every practical impiety ; but a remnant of true believers was still discoverable, nourished chiefly by those important truths which Augustin had so ably defended in the last age. Those truths, however, made but little impression in the East ; and the chief vestige that we find of revealed religion, is, the subject which still interested the leading bishops of the Greek church, themselves so destitute of every thing like the influence of heavenly grace in their conduct. This subject was the mysterious person of the Redeemer ; and although the object by no means sanctifies the instruments of their warfare, yet it bespeaks a public attention to a subject which is among the most important that belong to the Christian faith ; and if the great champions of the cause stand branded by their actions, as destitute of all spiritual union with the Redeemer, we may fairly adduce, by analogy from other parts of this history with which we happen to be better acquainted, that there was still, in the obscurer walks of life, a very considerable body of people, who loved the truth for its own sake, and who, by their numbers, in the view of their ambitious rulers, gave an importance to the contest.

The disputes of the last age, concerning the Nestorians, who divided the person of the blessed Saviour, and concerning the

<sup>1</sup> Rev. ix. 20, 21.

Eutychians, who confounded his divine and human natures, were still objects of contention among the bishops of the Greek churches. It is the best thing that we have to record of the Eastern church, that the truth remained with it. The errors of the sectaries, however, not being on points so fundamental, might perhaps be capable of an interpretation which would leave the truth inviolate respecting the Godhead of the Son, and the atonement in his blood. We may therefore still regard both these sects as included virtually in the universal church.

The Nestorians established a patriarch of their sect at Seleucia, and spread their doctrines, with great zeal and success, in the Eastern nations beyond the limits of the empire. By the Persian monarchs they were more tolerated than the Christians of the Greek church; and there are still extant authentic records, from which it appears, that throughout all Persia, as also in Armenia, Arabia, Syria, India, and other countries, there were vast numbers of Nestorian churches<sup>1</sup>, all under the jurisdiction of the patriarch of Seleucia.

The Eutychians also had many converts. The emperor Anastasius warmly espoused their cause<sup>2</sup>, and having expelled Flavian, the bishop of Antioch, placed Severus, one of the sect, in his room. After the emperor's death, Severus was expelled in his turn; and the Eutychians, opposed and oppressed by Justin, and the emperors who succeeded him, were nearly extinguished, when an obscure monk, of the name of Jacob, by his very extraordinary exertions, restored the sect to great consideration in many parts of the East, and from him they have been called Jacobites.

Another sect, which is mentioned as arising out of these controversies respecting the Trinity, were the Tritheists, who arose among the Eutychians, and maintained that in the Deity there existed three natures, or substances, absolutely equal in all respects, and joined together by no common essence.

Justin, who succeeded Anastasius, as has been intimated, restored in all places the profession of the Council of Chalcedon, which condemned the two heresies, and the church seems to have enjoyed some calm. We read that, a bishop of Antioch having been killed in a most tremendous earthquake which laid desolate that city, the people out of gratitude to Euphræmius, lieutenant of the East, for his great care in supplying the wants of the city during this calamity, elected him their bishop. The

<sup>1</sup> Mosheim.

<sup>2</sup> Evagrius.



bishopric of Antioch must still, therefore, have been a station of great importance.

Justinian followed the steps of Justin; but so unsettled were the minds of the Grecian bishops, that both Anthimius of Constantinople, and Theodosius of Alexandria, were deprived, for having embraced the Eutychian heresy. In the year 553, Justinian summoned the fifth general council, or second of Constantinople. Its decisions are considered of no great importance; it condemned certain positions of Origen, and certain writings called "The Three Chapters," supposed to be favourable to Nestorianism. Vigilius, the Roman bishop, was sent for to Constantinople, and compelled to subscribe their rejection; and some of the Western bishops, having refused to follow his example, were expelled. In his old age, Justinian entertained a notion, that the body of Christ was incorruptible; and he had the folly to attempt the establishment of it, as a doctrine, by an edict. Eutychius, bishop of Constantinople, had the integrity, however, to refuse the publication of the edict. "This," said he, "is not the doctrine of the apostles—it would follow from thence that the incarnation was only in fancy. How could an incorruptible body have been nourished by the milk of its mother? How was it possible for it, when on the cross, to be pierced with nails or the lance? It cannot be called incorruptible in any other sense, than as it was always unpolluted with any sinful defilement, and was not corrupted in the grave." For this opposition, the bishop was treated with great severity, and died in exile. The same fate awaited Anastasius, bishop of Antioch, to whose superior learning and piety, the policy of the other bishops had referred the emperor. But Justinian was suddenly taken off, in the thirty-eighth year of his reign. Justin II., though he acknowledged the true faith, did not restore Eutychius, and banished Anastasius from Antioch. We have reason to draw conclusions favourable to the real piety of both these prelates. After the short reign of Tiberius, Maurice succeeded.

At this time died the famous Simeon, celebrated for having lived eighty-three years on pillars elevated higher and higher. The superstition of the times invested him with miraculous powers; and he was consulted, during many years, as an oracle, by the great men of the world. These pillar-saints were numerous in the East; the master of Simeon had been one of that description, and had trained him from a youth to this species of austerity. Superstitions of every description were



growing up fast in the East. The Nestorian controversy had brought the Virgin Mary into particular notice : pictures of her, with Christ in her arms, were frequent, and were becoming the objects of adoration. The belief in the sanctifying virtue of relics was become excessive.

Of the remnant of true Christians in the catholic church of the Greeks, and in the two great sects of the Nestorians and Eutychians, we have very little more immediate information. In general, every superstitious and idolatrous corruption<sup>1</sup> of the Christian faith and worship, grew up faster in the East than in the West ; for, by the previous spoiling of the philosophy of the Alexandrian school, during many ages, they seemed to have found a more genial soil prepared for their reception. But the chief distinction to be observed in the history of religion, in the East and in the West, is, that no similar preservative against the worst effects of corruption of doctrine, like that produced by the ministry of Augustin in the West, was ever, as far we know, afforded to the Grecian churches. Their Jerome, a contemporary with Augustin, was far his inferior in evangelical knowledge. Mr Milner observes, “ he never opposes fundamental truths deliberately ; but though he owns them every where, does so defectively and often inconsistently.” “ His learned ignorance availed, more than any other cause, to give celebrity to superstition in the Christian world, and to darken the light of the gospel.” The fruits of Augustin’s ministry were very different, as we shall see hereafter ; he was a light shining in a dark place for many ages. But we may too truly exclaim of the Greek church, “ If the light which is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness !” The historian above mentioned is led to remark, “ As early as the seventh century, the influences of Divine grace seem to have been withheld in the East entirely. Men had there filled up the measure of their iniquity.” And it was at this era that the first race of Mahometans appeared, and almost entirely destroyed even the profession of Christianity in Africa, and in the greatest part of the East ; and millions voluntarily apostatised to the religion of the Arabian impostor<sup>2</sup>.

Of those who retained the profession of their religion under the dominion of the Saracens, it is said that the Macedonians and Eutychians met with more favour and encouragement from their conquerors, than the Greek Christians. This seems like

<sup>1</sup> Rev. ix. 20, 21.

<sup>2</sup> Mosheim.

a provision of the Divine mercy to preserve a remnant ; and we know that these sects, under their own bishops and patriarchs, were very widely extended over the East. The Nestorians, even as early as the seventh century, had penetrated into the north of China. With all their speculative errors, these sects, and especially the Eutychians, are admitted to have been more free from gross and idolatrous superstitions, than the Greeks ; and their missionary exertions among the pagans speak very highly in their favour.

But even in the Greek catholic church itself, we find that, as low as in the eleventh century, evangelical religion was not lost. Theophylact, a writer of that age, still recommended to the people the constant perusal of the Scriptures, and could teach with perspicuity some of their leading doctrines. “ The law,” he says, “ if it detect any man sinning, condemns him to death ; but the Holy Spirit, receiving those who have committed many offences in the laver of baptismal regeneration, justifies them, and quickens those who are dead in sin.” “ The righteousness of God preserves us, not our own righteousness ; for what righteousness can we have who are altogether corrupt ?” “ But God has justified us not by our works, but by faith.” “ The righteousness of God is by faith.” “ Moses asserts, that a man is justified by works. But none are found to fulfil them. Justification by the law is, therefore, rendered impossible. This is the righteousness of God, when a man is justified by grace, so that no blemish, no spot is found in him.” “ Faith,” he says, “ is looked on as contemptible, because of the foolishness of preaching. He who believes with great affection, extends his heart to God — he is united to him — his heart inflamed, conceives a strong assurance that it shall gain its desire. We all know this by experience, because Christ has said, ‘ Whatever ye ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.’ He who believes gives himself wholly to God ; he speaks to him with tears ; and in prayer holds the Lord, as it were, by the feet,” &c. &c. We may safely conclude with Mr. Milner, that the real church was still existing in the East. But Theophylact appears as the evening star of the Greek church ; after his time, there is but little that deserves our attention. The state itself, indeed, began to be greatly reduced by the victories of the Turks.

Dr. Mosheim, however, observes, that “ there were in Greece, and in all the Eastern provinces, a sort of men distinguished by the general and invidious name of Massalians or Euchites, both

terms signifying persons that pray ;” — “ that there are several circumstances which render it extremely probable that there were many persons of eminent piety and zeal for genuine Christianity,” who were comprehended under the term and ranked in the lists of heretics, “ only for opposing the raging superstition of the times.”

## CHAPTER THE SECOND.

### A SHORT VIEW OF THE HISTORY OF THE CIVIL AND ECCLESIASTICAL STATES IN THE WEST, DURING THE MIDDLE AGES.

#### SECT. I.

IN turning to the history of the West, the consolidation of the principal nations of the barbarians, under the predecessors of Charlemagne, with the restoration of the empire in the person of that prince, is the first event that claims our attention, and may serve to mark an era in the history of the church. Clotaire II. had again united the territories of the French monarchy<sup>1</sup>. Concerning the descendants of Clovis — the Most Christian Kings and Eldest Sons of the Roman church — this observation of Mr. Hallam may suffice : “ It is a weary and unprofitable task to follow these changes in detail, through scenes of tumult and bloodshed, in which the eye meets with no sunshine, nor can rest upon any interesting spot. It would be difficult, as Mr. Gibbon has justly observed, to find any where more vice or less virtue.” After Dagobert<sup>2</sup>, son of Clotaire II., the kings of France dwindled into personal insignificance<sup>3</sup> : their power was in fact exercised by an officer of the household, called the mayor of the palace. Among these ministers of the Merovingian kings, Pepin rose<sup>4</sup> to the highest importance. His son, Charles Martel, is renowned in history, for having stopped the progress of the Saracens in Europe ; they had overrun Spain, and penetrated into the heart of France, when he gained a complete victory over them between Tours and Poitiers. His son, another Pepin, was not content with the substantials of royalty, but after a solemn reference to Pope Zachary, whose sanction

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 613.

<sup>2</sup> A.D. 628.

<sup>3</sup> A.D. 635.

<sup>4</sup> A.D. 680.

he obtained, deposed his master, Childeric III., and dismissed him to a convent.

This revolution<sup>1</sup> was of great importance to the rise of the ecclesiastical state, of which the see of Rome was the head, though it is not yet to be ranked as a temporal power. At the close of the sixth century, under the pontificate of Gregory the Great, Rome, we have seen, was under the dominion of the Greek emperors, whose representative, the exarch, resided at Ravenna; but the third race of barbarians, the Lombards, who, after the Heruli and Ostrogoths, had established themselves in Italy, were in possession of its fairest regions, and pressed hard upon the ancient capital. Rome had reached, about the end of the sixth century, the lowest period of her oppression; "and like Thebes, Babylon, or Carthage," Mr. Gibbon observes, "the name of Rome might have been erased from the earth, if the city had not been animated by a vital principle, which again restored her to honour and dominion."

This vital principle, which once more saved the eternal city, we cannot say was the religion of Christ, however that religion might dwell in the hearts of a remnant in Rome; but, to use Mr. Milner's expressions, it was "the seeds of Antichrist vigorously shooting;" "the poisonous plant," "which the reputation of Gregory" "contributed much to mature; and if it be true, as this respectable historian is of opinion, that the three discriminating marks of the papacy—idolatry, spiritual tyranny, and the doctrine of the merit of works, had not yet procured an establishment at Rome, the apostate was certainly erecting her house," "and had begun 'to send forth her maidens.' Rome was, in fact, become the object of a veneration to the nations of the earth, but little less than idolatrous, on account of the reputed relics of St. Peter and St. Paul, whose tombs their keepers believed, or feigned to believe, were guarded by miracles and invisible terrors; and on account of a notion, which had some time been growing up in the Christian world, that the bishop of Rome was the living representative of the prince of the apostles, and the vicar of Christ upon earth."

The chair of St. Peter, indeed, during the sixth century, becomes of a very equivocal character. The bishops of Rome were, at the commencement of it, the subjects of the Gothic kings; and the annals of the rising popedom were dishonoured by a long and violent contest between Symmachus and Lau-

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 752.

rentius, who were elected to fill the see, by two opposite factions, on the same day. The contest was carried on with assassinations and massacres. The candidates accused each other of the most detestable crimes. Three different councils assembled at Rome, to endeavour to put an end to this disgraceful affair; but it could be decided only by the authority of Theodoric, who had summoned the competitors before him, at Ravenna. Symmachus, without being cleared in his character, was established in the see; and never was the adulation of the infatuated multitude, towards the Roman pontiff, carried to a greater height, than at this period. "It was decreed in a numerous synod, 'that the pope was pure from all sin, and exempt from all judgment<sup>1</sup>.'" The same person, Ennodius<sup>2</sup>, bishop of Pavia, who had promoted this impious flattery, is celebrated for having written against the doctrines of grace. On the other hand, when Maxentius, a Scythian monk, in company with a number of monks his brethren, ably defended these doctrines, they were ill treated by Hormisdas, bishop of Rome, accused of turbulence and self-conceit, and, after a long attendance at Rome, expelled thence by his orders. We can but wish, with Mr. Milner, that we had a larger account of a man that was counted worthy to suffer shame for the faith of Christ.

Theodoric, at the end of his life, in a moment of jealousy and resentment, prevented the choice of the Romans, by nominating a bishop in the palace of Ravenna. The danger and ferocious scenes of a schism were mildly restrained, and the last decree of the senate was enacted to extinguish, if it were possible, the scandalous venality of the papal elections<sup>3</sup>. Nor had the ecclesiastical transactions at Rome, on the ascendant of the imperial arms, been at all more creditable to the bishops of the princely city. Theodora, the empress, gave an order to Vigilius deacon of the Roman church, to require Belisarius to secure his election to the bishopric, and the expulsion of Silverius, at that time bishop. Vigilius was in that case to present Belisarius with two hundred pounds of gold. The venal general executed the order, and Silverius was delivered

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 503.

<sup>2</sup> "Ennodius, p. 1621, 1622, 1636, 1638: his libel was approved and entered synodoliter by a Roman council: Baronius, A.D. 503." GIBBON. This Ennodius, among other assertions, maintained that the Roman pontiff was constituted judge in the place of God, which he filled as the vicegerent of the most High." MOSHEIM.

<sup>3</sup> GIBBON.

into the hands of Vigilius, who sent him to the island of Palmaria, where he died of hunger. Vigilius governed during eighteen years<sup>1</sup> the see he had thus obtained by bribery and murder.

If the piety of an individual could have redeemed the character of the Roman see, we may, perhaps, admit that, in better times that of the First Gregory might have done so ; but at the period, at which he was placed at the head of the Roman church, influenced as he was by the delusive spirit of the day, what there actually was of real worth in his private character, only added weight to the preponderating evil, and procured credit to “ the mystery of iniquity,” which had long been working secretly, but was now openly prevailing. If charity can find an example, in the knowledge of Gregory’s private character, that much sincere and genuine piety may subsist in the heart, under the chastening hand of the Father of spirits — while we contemplate, in public life, nothing but the mischievous career of the successful promoter of an extravagant superstition, we must also remember, that nothing but the acknowledgment that this celebrated bishop was a deluded victim of a most blind and abject superstition, can redeem his character from the charge of imposture and of “ speaking lies in hypocrisy, having the conscience seared.” Gregory was far from being behind his contemporaries in recommending the efficacy of superstitious practices for the procurement of salvation, in advancing the credit of relics and lying miracles. The admission of pictures and images into the churches, as books for the unlearned, was, in the circumstances of the times, but the introduction of idolatry ; and when he himself could send presents, or sell at a considerable price the oil from the lamps that burned at the tombs of the apostles, as being possessed of miraculous powers, it sufficiently shews how “ strong ” the “ delusion ” was in his own mind.

When the empress Constantia applied to Gregory for relics of St. Peter and St. Paul, he represented the danger of approaching them. He told her “ that dreadful visions had chastised the presumption of his predecessor, and that some persons had actually been punished with death for attempting to change something in the tomb of St. Laurence ; ” “ but though he could not give any of the precious relics themselves, a piece of cloth that approached the bodies of the apostles would have imbibed

<sup>1</sup> To 555.

the miraculous virtue, and he would send her also some filings of St. Peter's chain, encased in a key, providing the priest could make an impression with the sacred file ; for this depended entirely on the merits of the person for whom the present was intended. If Gregory was indeed a sincere Christian, he believed this lie. But then, what an instrument must he have been in the hand of the great deceiver, to carry on these delusions in a most ignorant and superstitious age, when the blind led the blind, and ' the ears ' of ' the people were turned away from the truth to listen unto fables ', and when the apostasy, long predicted, and long advancing in its progress, was soon to become total and universal ! ”

The pontificate of Gregory<sup>1</sup> is, accordingly, one of the great epochs which mark in history the advancement of the ecclesiastical state.

Mr. Hallam is of opinion, that no material acquisitions of ecclesiastical power were obtained by the successors of Gregory, for nearly one hundred and fifty years. The Roman see had as yet acquired no temporal sovereignty, nor were the nations of the West yet reduced to submit to the papal monarchy. The superstition of the times, and especially the ignorance of the new barbarian nations, had exalted the first bishop of the church to this high degree of veneration ; but the same causes were as fast exalting the bishops of other churches to a similar degree of importance. So that we are at first to mark the rise of the ecclesiastical state generally — an empire within an empire — before we express the actual erection of the popedom, or sacerdotal monarchy of St. Peter.

The claims which Gregory and some of his predecessors had laid to the exclusive power of the keys, as the successors of St. Peter, were far from being as yet admitted universally. The prevailing opinion on this matter, was still that which I have already brought to the reader's notice in the days of Cyprian, — that all the bishops were joint sharers in one indivisible episcopacy : an opinion still partly held by some Roman Catholics. The bishops of the lesser sees, however, had for ages been becoming more and more dependent on the bishops of those great cities, whom ecclesiastical usage, and not any supposed Divine authority, had dignified with the titles of metropolitan archbishops and patriarchs. Of these patriarchs, the bishop of Rome, as we have seen, was always the first in rank and

<sup>1</sup> From A.D. 590 to 604.



dignity. His patriarchate originally comprehended only the southern part of Italy, and the three chief Mediterranean islands, and consisted of ten provinces; but it happened, that no bishop had been raised to the rank of metropolitan in these provinces, so that the patriarch exercised in them all the more immediate rights of metropolitan bishop. Hence it was that, though the jurisdiction of the Roman patriarch was far less extensive than that of some of the other patriarchs, he possessed much more authority and influence within his limits. To this original patriarchate the province of Illyricum had been added, by the encroachment of Siricius, in the fourth century; and no bishop was consecrated there without the consent of the bishop of Rome.

In the middle of the sixth century, we find them confirming the elections of the archbishops of Milan. "But the metropolitans were not inclined to surrender their prerogatives; and upon the whole, the papal authority had made no decisive progress in France, nor perhaps any where beyond Italy, till the pontificate of Gregory I.<sup>1</sup>"

This pontiff seems to have established the appellant jurisdiction of the see of Rome, so often asserted and resisted, on the deposition of a bishop in Spain, who appealed to him. We find Gregory sending a legate with full powers to confirm or rescind the sentence. He says in his letter on this occasion: "This cause should have been heard and decided by the apostolic see, which is the head of all the churches." Writing to the bishops of France, he enjoins them to obey Vigilius, bishop of Arles, whom he has appointed his legate in France, according to ancient custom: so that if any contention should arise in the church, he may appease it by his authority, as vicerent of the apostolic see<sup>2</sup>.

But it was in the new character, which charity, as well as ambition, might have induced the Roman bishops to take upon

<sup>1</sup> Hallam, in his *History of the Middle Ages*, vol. ii. p. 23, observes in a note, "Consultations or references to the bishop of Rome, in difficult cases of faith or discipline, had been common in early ages, and were even made by provincial and national councils. But these were also made to other bishops, eminent for personal merit or the dignity of their sees. The popes endeavoured to claim this as a matter of right. Innocent I. asserts (A.D. 402), that he was to be consulted, *quoties fidei ratio ventilatur*; and Gelasius (A.D. 492), *quantum ad religionem pertinet, non nisi apostolicæ sedi, juxta canones, debetur summa judicii totius*.—As the oak is in the acorn, so did these maxims contain the system of Bellarmine."—DE MARCA, lib. i. cap. 10; and DUPIN, lib. vii. cap. 12.

<sup>2</sup> See note in Hallam, vol. ii. p. 24.

themselves in these ages, that of “the apostle to the West,” or chief director of the missions to the barbarians, that we see the foundation of the papal authority most firmly laid. When we consider its claims on the ancient churches, what would the parent see demand of veneration and jurisdiction over the churches which her agents had planted? We find, accordingly, that the most successful missionaries were the most strenuous supporters of the papal encroachments. This may be evinced by the labours of Remigius in Gaul, of Augustin in Britain, and afterwards of Boniface in Germany.

In the fifth century, we saw the establishment of the French monarchy in Gaul, by Clovis, and his conversion to the Christian faith: a poor specimen of barbarian converts! Ambition, violence, and most abominable treachery, mark his subsequent life. He enlarged his dominions at the expense of the Burgundians and Visigoths. His motive for attacking the latter, as he expressed it in a speech to his nobles assembled at Paris, was, that he saw, with concern, the most fertile part of Gaul in the possession of the Arians. He vowed to erect a church in honour of the holy apostles, if he succeeded in his enterprise.

Of the barbarians in Spain, we find Recared the first catholic king. Levigildus, king of the Visigoths, had married his eldest son into the French family. Ingonda, though persecuted by her Arian mother-in-law, was firm in her principles. She found a friend and coadjutor in Leander, bishop of Seville, and was the means of bringing her husband to the acknowledgment of the true faith. The enraged father commenced a severe persecution on all who held the catholic doctrines in his dominions, and his son was driven into rebellion. Ingonda fleeing for protection to the Greek emperor, died by the way. Her husband falling into his father’s power, was by him put to death, for refusing the communion at the hands of an Arian bishop. But the father, struck with remorse, and, we may hope, with the superior piety of his martyred son, a little before his death committed his second son Recared to the care of Leander, to be educated in the same principles<sup>1</sup>. On his succession to the crown, Recared’s first object was the establishment of the orthodox faith, which he had zealously embraced.

He urged his subjects to follow his example, by the testimony of Earth and Heaven. The testimony of the Earth was,

<sup>1</sup> Gregory of Tours.

the submission of all nations, except the Visigoths; the testimony of Heaven was, the miraculous cures performed by the clergy of the general church, the baptismal fonts of Osset, in Boetica, which were spontaneously replenished each year, on the vigil of Easter, and the miraculous shrine of St. Martin of Tours, which had already converted the Suevic prince and people of Galicia. After some difficulties, eight bishops, whose names betray their barbaric origin, abjured their errors. The whole body of the Visigoths and Suevi were allured or driven into the pale of the catholic communion. Seventy bishops, assembled in the council of Toledo, received the submission of their conquerors. "The ambassadors of Recared respectfully offered, on the threshold of the Vatican, rich presents of gold and gems: they accepted, as a lucrative exchange, the hairs of St. John the Baptist, a cross which inclosed a small piece of the true wood, and a key that contained some particles of iron which had been scraped from the chains of St. Peter<sup>1</sup>."

After a violent struggle of a hundred and fifty years, the Saxons had succeeded in destroying every remain of Roman civilisation in Britain; and driving the inhabitants into the remote counties of Wales and Cornwall, or to the opposite coast of Brittany, had erected their several kingdoms known by the name of the Heptarchy. Wherever the Saxon arms prevailed, every vestige of Christianity was destroyed; and, except perhaps in the secret belief of a few that had been reduced to slavery, pagan darkness had again become total in England. But towards the close of the sixth century, the sun of Christianity arose once more, eclipsed indeed by the growing superstitions of the times, but still with sufficient light to restore the day to these benighted regions. And though we may doubt the spirituality of most of the kings and people who were converted to the faith, yet its introduction must be considered as one of the main causes of the civilisation of our savage ancestors.

For this national benefit we are indebted principally to the charity of Gregory, bishop of Rome. Before his election to that see, when walking in the forum, as an ancient author relates<sup>2</sup>, "he saw some handsome youths exposed to sale. Asking of what country they were, he was told they were from the island of Britain. 'Are the inhabitants of that island Christians, or pagans?' 'They are pagans,' was the reply.

<sup>1</sup> Gibbon, 4to, vol. iii. p. 549.

<sup>2</sup> Bede.

‘ Alas !’ said he, deeply sighing, ‘ that the prince of darkness should possess countenances so luminous, and that so fair a front should carry minds destitute of eternal grace ! · What is the name of the nation ?’ ‘ Angli,’ it was said. ‘ In truth, they have angelic countenances, and it is pity they should not be coheirs with angels in heaven. What is the province from which they come ?’ ‘ Deira’—the ancient name of Northumberland. ‘ It is well,’ said he, ‘ De irâ, snatched from the wrath of God. What is the name of their king ?’ ‘ Ella,’ was the answer. ‘ Alleluia should be sung to God in those regions.’” He entreated to be himself sent by the bishop on the mission he had projected, but he could not be spared to go from Rome. After his consecration<sup>1</sup>, he directed a presbyter, whom he had sent into France, to instruct some young Saxons, of seventeen or eighteen years of age, in Christianity. This was the preparation for the mission which he actually sent two years afterwards ; having recommended them to the attention of Etherius, bishop of Arles, and Brunehout, queen of the Franks.

These missionaries were a number of monks, at the head of whom was one of the name of Augustin<sup>2</sup>. They arrived on the coast of Kent ; but their way had already been prepared by the marriage of Bertha, the only daughter of Caribert, king of Paris, with Ethelbert, who then reigned in Kent. It had been stipulated on her marriage, that she should enjoy the free exercise of her religion, and she had brought with her a French bishop to the court of Dorobernium, now Canterbury. The character given of Bertha is, that, contrary to the descendants of Clovis in general, she was sound in her principles and exemplary in her conduct, and had much influence over her husband. The king assigned the missionaries, nearly forty in number, a habitation in the Isle of Thanet ; but when he gave them an audience, he appointed it to take place in the open air, under an apprehension of their using enchantments. Augustin and his companions met him with the superstitious rites of the age, and singing litanies. They had announced to the king that they came from Rome, and had brought him the best tidings, “ eternal life to those who received them, and the endless enjoyment of life with the living and true God.” When Ethelbert had heard them deliver their discourse, his answer was : “ They are fine words and promises that you bring ; but because they are new and uncertain, I cannot give my assent to

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 595.

<sup>2</sup> A.D. 597.

them, nor relinquish the religious practices which the English nation has so long followed." Giving them credit, however, for their disinterestedness and good intention in coming so far for the benefit of an unknown people, he promised to provide for their wants, assigned them a mansion in the royal city of Canterbury, and gave them full permission to preach, and to make converts to their religion.

It cannot be doubted, from the known sentiments of Gregory, and of the orthodox churches of these times, that though cumbered with a thousand vanities and childish superstitions, these missionaries brought with them the essential truths of the Gospel; that they preached repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ; and that among the number who embraced the faith of the Roman messengers, some were indeed the converts of that 'eternal grace' which Gregory acknowledged. But as a public work among the Saxon nations, from all that appears in this and the following ages, the conversion of princes and people must be allowed to be merely nominal. And I cannot but conceive the pretension of the missionaries to miraculous powers, to be an awful characteristic; for as the bishop of Rheims had wrought miracles in the sight of Clovis, and the king of the Goths in Spain had been won by the same testimony from heaven, so Augustin wrought miracles in the sight of the king of Kent<sup>1</sup>.

The success of these missions tended greatly to the exaltation of the Roman see. But above all, the papal supremacy was indebted to the great increase of the monastic orders, and more particularly to the new institution<sup>2</sup> of the Benedictine order, which in a manner absorbed all the others. The intentions of its founder, Benedict of Nursia, might be good,—to form an order more pure and useful, who, devoting themselves to the monastic life, might divide their time between social worship, learning, the education of youth, and other labours of piety and charity. The new order rapidly increased, and supplied, generally, all the most useful missionaries; but it became, in a very short period, a well-trained army, subject more directly than the secular clergy to the power of the pope; esteeming it among their most meritorious enterprises, to enlarge and extend his power and authority, who, in fact, was their most useful patron, and the person to whom they owed their aggrandisement. Hence the distinction of the members

<sup>1</sup> Compare Rev. xiii. 13, &c.

<sup>2</sup> A.D. 529.

'Alas!' said he, deeply sighing, 'that the prince should possess countenances so luminous, and that the clergy, whose front should carry minds destitute of eternal luminosity. Of the name of the nation?' 'Angli,' it was said, and successful have angelic countenances, and it is predicted as the most dex-coheirs with angels in heaven. What, then, the firm belief of which they come?' 'Deira'—the word succeeded, was one of the berland. 'It is well,' said he, 'the religion and advancing wrath of God. What is the reason, by the magic of her super-the answer. 'Alleluia should be the world which the arms of her He entreated to be his—conquered and governed. he had projected, but 'After his consecration, the superstitious veneration in which they had been sent into France, their idolatrous priests, would prepare the or eighteen years, their dominion, is obvious; but we are much peration for the spiritual at this period, so many marks, in different wards; but the remains of the old Gentile religion, in the mass bishop of the common people. We find, indeed, in several instances, wh the ancient bishops of the church complain, that their c that the common ministry was much impeded by the attachment of the common people to their idolatrous pastimes and amusements; and that, with all their eloquence and zeal, they could with difficulty withhold many of the members of the church from joining in these mischievous amusements. The new policy dictated to the Romish missionaries may justly be said to have compromised this matter; it allowed these games and customs, consecrated by new names, and to new objects of devotion. In particular, the Lupercalia, or feast of Pan,—which had so much excited the indignation of Augustin, and the toleration of which a late bishop of Rome had mentioned among the causes of that Divine judgment which had ruined the empire,—were now converted into the festival of "the Purification of the Blessed Virgin." Our church-wakes and commemoration-days of patron saints had the same pagan origin. But before the inroads of the barbarians, it appears that the people, in many districts, were still professedly pagans.

After the death of Gregory<sup>1</sup>, we have little concern with the succeeding pontiffs, but to mention that one of them, Martin, under the tyranny of the Greek emperor, who contrived to get him into his hands, died a martyr, for maintaining the truth against a new error that the Greeks had embraced, which ascribed but one will to the Redeemer, denying, as it was under-

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 604.

d, his twofold nature. But, from various circumstances, power of the distant government of Constantinople was fast waning in the city of Rome, and the temporal influence and political power of the bishop were increasing in the same proportion. Mr. Gibbon seems to have given a very fair and accurate account of the rise of this 'novel power.' "The misfortunes of the apostolic pastor in the business of peace and war might be doubtful to himself, whether piety or ambition prompted him to supply the place of his absent sovereign." In the eighth century, the bishop and people of Rome found an occasion of revolt, and were involved in actual rebellion, in support of the worship of images and pictures. The ancient fathers had strenuously opposed the introduction of these into the churches, as often as any disposition discovered itself to that effect. Augustin, who saw, perhaps, the rise of this practice, has left a decided testimony against it. "They are of more force to pervert the soul than to instruct it;" and "when images are once placed in temples and had in honour, error creepeth in." Jerom, though a great patron of relics, observes, that the error of images passed to the Christians from the Gentiles; and Eusebius the historian says, that images of Peter and Paul, and of our Saviour himself, were made in his time, which he took "to be a heathenish custom." The practice had evidently increased, and was verging towards actual idolatry in the sixth century. Serenus, bishop of Marseilles, observing some of his people adoring the images which had been placed in the churches, in his zeal broke them; but this conduct gave so much disgust, that many withdrew from his communion. Gregory rebukes him on this account, and wishes him to conciliate the affections of the people, by permitting them to make use of images, or pieces of history, to instruct their minds in the great facts of Christianity. He advises him to allow them 'as books for the illiterate people,' and at the same time to caution them seriously against paying any adoration to them<sup>1</sup>. That Serenus had formed the better judgment, the event has shewn. But the church of Rome seems to have led the way in the introduction of this new idolatry. Some of the Greek emperors had been active in destroying these pictures and images, while in Italy they were held in adoration; and when the emperor Leo III. began openly to oppose the worship and erection of images, it produced

<sup>1</sup> Milner — from Gregory's Epistles.



a rupture between him and the Roman see<sup>1</sup>. Gregory II., at that time bishop, openly defended the practice against the imperial authority.

The temporal power of the popes was founded on this rebellion. The conduct of the second and third Gregory, says Mr. Gibbon, in this memorable contest, is variously interpreted by the wishes of their friends and their enemies. Two original epistles of Gregory III. to the emperor Leo are still extant; they exhibit the portrait, or, at least, the mask, of the founder of the papal monarchy. Gregory defends the worship of images, with the same arguments and distinctions that a Gentile idolater would have done, for he knew the difference between the invisible demon and his representative image. "Because you are unlearned and ignorant, we are obliged to write to you rude discourses, but full of sense and of the word of God." "We conjure you to quit your pride, and to hear us with humility." "You say that we adore stones, walls, and boards—it is not so, my lord; but those symbols make us recollect the persons whose names they bear, and exalt our grovelling minds. We do not look upon them as gods; but if it be the image of Jesus, we say, *Lord help us*. If it be the image of his mother, we say, *Pray to your Son for us*. If it be a martyr, we say, *St. Stephen pray for us*." "We might, as having the power of St. Peter, pronounce judgments against you; but as you have pronounced the curse upon yourself, let it stick to you." "You write to us to assemble a general council; of which there is no need. Do you cease to persecute images, and all will be quiet." "We fear not your threats; for if we go a league from Rome towards Campania we are secure." "Are you ignorant that the popes are the bond of union, the mediator of peace between the East and the West? The eyes of the nations are fixed on our humility, and they revere, as a god upon earth, the apostle Peter, whose image you threaten to destroy. The remote and interior kingdoms of the West present their homage to Christ and his vicerent," &c. Commotions were excited throughout Italy; the Italians swore to live and die in the defence of the pope and the holy images. In a synod of ninety-three bishops, the pope pronounced a sentence of excommunication, tacitly including the emperor himself.

When the sovereignty of the Greek emperor was extinguished,

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 727.

the inhabitants of Rome, from necessity, were cast into a rough model of a republican government ; their foreign and domestic councils were moderated by the authority of the bishop, who was considered as the first magistrate and prince of the city, and addressed by the title of Dominus, or Lord<sup>1</sup>.

Under pope Zachary, who had authorised the deposition of the French king, Mr. Hallam notes another epocha of the advance of the spiritual authority of the see of Rome. The church of France, and even that of England, though planted by Gregory I., continued to preserve a tolerable measure of independence. National councils were still convoked by princes, and canons enacted under their authority by the bishops who attended. “ The first striking infringement of this independence, was made through the influence of an Englishman, Winfrid, better known as St. Boniface, the apostle of Germany. Having undertaken the conversion of Thuringia, and other still heathen countries, he applied to the pope for a commission, and was consecrated bishop, without any determinate see. Upon this occasion he took an oath of obedience, and became ever after a zealous upholder of the apostolic chair. His success in the conversion of Germany was great, his reputation eminent, which enabled him to effect a material revolution in ecclesiastical government. Pelagius II. had, about 580, sent a pallium, or vest peculiar to metropolitans, to the bishop of Arles, perpetual vicar of the Roman see in Gaul. Gregory I. had made a similar present to other metropolitans. But it was never supposed that they were obliged to wait for this favour before they received consecration, until a synod of the French and German bishops, held at Frankfort, in 742, by Boniface, as legate of pope Zachary. It was here enacted that, as a token of their willing subjection to the see of Rome, all metropolitans should request the pallium at the hands of the pope, and obey his lawful commands. This was construed by the popes to mean a promise of obedience before receiving the pall ; which was changed, in after-times, by Gregory VII., into an oath of fealty. This council of Frankfort claims a leading place as an epoch in the history of the papacy. Several events ensued, chiefly of a political nature, which rapidly elevated that usurpation almost to its greatest height. Another event of a different description contributed still more to raise the bishop of Rome above his fellows. “ About the conclusion of the eighth century there appeared, under the name of one

<sup>1</sup> Gibbon.

Isidore, an unknown person, a collection of ecclesiastical canons, now commonly denominated the false decretals.” These purported to be rescripts or decrees of the early bishops of Rome, and their effect was to diminish the authority of metropolitans over their suffragans, by establishing an appellat jurisdiction of the Roman see in all causes, and by forbidding national councils to be held without its consent. “ Upon these spurious decretals was built the great fabric of papal supremacy over the different national churches—a fabric which has stood after its foundation crumbled beneath it; for no one has pretended to deny, for the last two centuries, that the imposture is too palpable for any but the most ignorant ages to credit<sup>1</sup>.”

The Lombards, as we have seen, took advantage of the disorders excited in Italy, and wrested the exarchate of Ravenna<sup>2</sup> from the Eastern empire. The pope and his new republic were likely only to exchange masters. On this occasion, the Roman pontiff had recourse to France. At the request of Stephen II., Pepin descended from the Alps, drove the Lombards from their recent conquests, and conferred them upon the pope. This memorable donation comprised nearly the modern provinces of Romagna and the March of Ancona<sup>3</sup>. Thus the third of the barbarian nations that had threatened to extinguish the papacy in its rise, was removed out of its way; and Charlemagne, succeeding his father Pepin, reduced the whole kingdom of the Lombards to his subjection.

The same prince had also annexed to his dominions, Spain, as far as the Ebro, and various parts of Germany, as far as the Elbe, the Saale, and the Bohemian mountains, and a line drawn from thence crossing the Danube above Vienna, and also the greater part of Italy, as far as the borders of Naples. Both Charlemagne and Pepin had possessed the actual sovereignty of the city of Rome, under the title of Patrician<sup>4</sup>; but in the last year of the eighth century, the pope, in the name of the Roman people, placed the imperial crown on the head of Charlemagne; and in his person the Western empire has been considered as having been restored. This prince, indeed, concentrated in him-

<sup>1</sup> Hist. of the Middle Ages, vol. ii. p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> A.D. 752.

<sup>3</sup> A.D. 754.

<sup>4</sup> “ A good deal of obscurity rests over the internal government of Rome for near fifty years; but there is some reason to believe that the nominal sovereignty of the Greek emperors was not entirely abrogated.” “ The patricians of the lower empire were governors sent from Constantinople to the provinces. The popes exercised a considerable share of authority.”—HALLAM.

self nearly all the power of the barbarian nations. Spain, after having remained for nearly three centuries in the hands of the Visigoths, had been subdued by the Saracens<sup>1</sup>; but a remnant of the former nation preserved their independence in the northern mountains, and after a warfare of some centuries, restored the monarchy. With the contests of the Anglo-Saxons among themselves, and with the Danes, my readers are of course familiar. Egbert united the kingdoms of the Heptarchy<sup>2</sup> a few years after the death of Charlemagne.

During these two centuries the ecclesiastical estate, though often exposed to rapine and violence, had every where risen to great wealth and importance. The bishops and clergy, and especially the monastic orders, had found a most profuse liberality in the superstition of the barbarian nations and princes; inso-much, that in the course of ages, it is calculated that half the landed property of these nations had fallen into their hands. "Supposing that gain was godliness," "with feigned words shall they make merchandise of you"—strongly mark, according to the Scripture, the growth of the predicted apostasy. The ancient church had, in many places, been possessed of considerable wealth, and her earlier bishops are often celebrated for their munificent charities. We may say that almost down to the beginning of this period, this mode of disposing of their wealth was, with few exceptions, characteristic of the Christian clergy; and, no doubt, had been one great source of their influence. But covetousness in the acquisition of this wealth began very early to mark the declension of true piety. Under Valentinian I. a prohibition was issued, that the clergy should not receive the bequests of women<sup>3</sup>: "A modification," Mr. Hallam observes, "more discreditable than any general law could have been." Several of the fathers also severely reprobated the prevailing avidity of their contemporaries. But all their former acquisitions amounted to nothing, in comparison of the wealth which was now poured upon them by the more unenlightened barbarians, as an expiation for their crimes, for the purchase of prayers and intercessions, masses for the dead—for purgatory was already invented—and to adorn the shrines and relics of their patron saints and martyrs.

The jurisdiction possessed by the ecclesiastics was another source of their power. Mr. Hallam traces this jurisdiction to the arbitrate power exercised by the primitive bishops over their own flocks. Constantine had directed the civil magistrates

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 712.<sup>2</sup> A.D. 827.<sup>3</sup> A.D. 370.

to enforce the execution of episcopal awards. But it appears, by a novel of Valentinian II.<sup>1</sup>, that the church had still no jurisdiction in questions of a temporal nature, except by means of the joint reference of contending parties. Charlemagne, by confirming an edict of Constantine—supposed to be forged—on the appeal of one of the parties, granted to the bishops a power, in many cases, to call before them causes pending in the secular courts.

By the legislative enactments of Justinian, the clergy, both in civil and in criminal suits, had long been possessed of various immunities and exemptions. These were considerably enlarged and multiplied in the Western kingdoms. “Charlemagne seems to have extended to the whole body of the clergy an absolute exemption from the judicial authority of the magistrate. The spiritual courts, indeed, at length usurped, under sophistical pretences, and by the credit of more fair and intelligent decisions, almost the whole administration of justice.”

To the riches and jurisdiction of this ‘new estate’ must be added their vast political importance, both as the chief members of national assemblies, and as the tutors, counsellors, and ministers of princes. “They alone were acquainted with the art of writing, and were entrusted with political correspondence, and with the framing of the laws. In the fall of Rome, their influence upon the barbarians wore down the asperities of conquest, and saved the provincials half the shock of that tremendous revolution. As captive Greece is said to have subdued her Roman conqueror, so Rome, in her turn of servitude, cast the fetters of moral captivity upon the fierce invaders of the North, chiefly through the exertions of her bishops, whose ambition may be forgiven for its effects. Her religion, her language, in part even her laws, were transplanted into the courts of Paris and Toledo, which became a degree less barbarous by imitation<sup>2</sup>.”

But the hierarchy of the Roman churches, though exercising so large a share of the civil power, was, every where, still subordinate to the state. Kings convoked, regulated, and dissolved ecclesiastical councils, and often interfered in the election of bishops. Charlemagne maintained his ecclesiastical supremacy with the greatest vigour; but under some of his successors great encroachments were made on the royal authority, and the contest between the crown and the mitre fills many a page of the subsequent history of the European nations; till, at length, the see

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 450.

<sup>2</sup> Hallam, vol. xi. p. 15.

of Rome was erected into a spiritual monarchy, which not only destroyed the liberty and independence of national churches; but, on various occasions, trampled upon all the rights of temporal sovereigns.

A difference is early noticed in the character of the bishops of France and those of Spain. The former, even before the deposition of the sons of Clovis, had degenerated into fighting and hunting barbarians; while the latter maintained far better their appropriate character, and accordingly commanded much more respect from their countrymen, and acquired a greater influence over them. In Britain and Germany, the clergy, in the first part of this period, were making their way as missionaries. They, of course, were still less morally corrupt, and we may hope, in some of these missions, true religion was both taught and received; though, it is but too true, the same "lying wonders," the same doctrine of "voluntary humility" and of "the worship of angels," and a more than ordinary subjugation to the papacy, every where pervaded them.

After the death of Augustin, in England, Laurentius, who had succeeded him in the see of Canterbury, pursued the objects of the mission with great zeal and diligence. In conjunction with Mellitus, bishop of London, and Justus, bishop of Rochester, he endeavoured to reduce the sects of Ireland to a conformity with the English church. "Even the present times<sup>1</sup>," observes the venerable Bede, in his history, "declare how little success he had."

On the death of Ethelbert, king of Kent, the missionaries met with a great reverse. Eadbald, his successor, treated their religion with contempt, and many of the people relapsed into idolatry. Almost the same thing happened among the East Saxons. The three sons of Sabareth, who had embraced Christianity, on their father's death returned to idolatry. These princes observing the bishop of London distribute the bread of the eucharist in the church, asked why he had not given it to them, as he had done to their father, and as he did at that very time to the people. "If you will be washed," replied Mellitus, "in the same laver of regeneration in which your father was, you may partake of the sacred bread; but if ye despise the laver of life, ye cannot partake of the bread of life." "We will not," they said, "enter into the fountain, as we do not know that we need it, yet we choose to eat of the bread." On his refusal to

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 731.



comply, the bishop and his associates were expelled. Mellitus joined Laurentius and Justus in Kent, and they all agreed to relinquish their mission. Mellitus and Justus had proceeded to France, and Laurentius was to follow; but having spent the night in earnest prayer, with much agony and many tears, he found, in the morning, a great alteration in the king, when he waited on him to take leave. If this might stand alone, nothing could be more satisfactory as to the views of these missionaries; but when we read from the same historian who narrates the circumstance, that St. Peter appeared to him, and whipped him severely for his cowardice, and that it was the pitiable sight of the stripes that the bishop had received, which moved the king to relent, we cannot but suspect fraud and artifice. If good did arise from the evil, and "through his lie, the truth of God more abounded," to Him, and not to the missionaries of Rome, must be the glory; their "condemnation is just." But from this time the king of Kent is said to have become a zealous supporter of the faith. Justus and Mellitus were recalled: the former was restored to Rochester; but the Londoners, preferring idolatry, refused to receive the latter, who some time afterwards succeeded Laurentius in the see of Canterbury. Mellitus died five years after, and was succeeded by Justus<sup>1</sup>. In the following year the Gospel was introduced into the North of England.

Edwin, king of Northumberland, had married a sister of the Kentish king, with consent that she should continue the profession of her religion; and Paulinus, who was consecrated bishop of the North, by Justus, was appointed to attend her. The issue was the conversion of the king and the nation. How many among the converts felt in reality the power of Divine grace, will not be known till the Great Day shall declare it; but even where our venerable author goes into detail, his account, how interesting soever it may be, is not satisfactory as to the motives which led to the triumph of one religion over the other. We can only admire the providence, as replete with blessings to future generations.

Edwin, won by a victory which he had obtained over his enemies, called together his friends and advisers. "What," he demanded of them, "is this hitherto unheard-of doctrine, this new worship?" Coifi, the chief of the priests, answered, "See you, O king, what this is which is lately preached to us? I declare most frankly what I have found to be true, that the re-

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 624.



ligion which we have hitherto followed is of no value. If the gods could do any thing, they would more particularly distinguish me with their favours, who have served them so diligently. If the new doctrine be really better, let us embrace it." Another of the nobles observed, that he had taken notice of a swallow which had rapidly flown through the king's house, entering by one door and going out at the other. This happened, he said, when the king was sitting at supper in the hall: a fire burning in the midst, and the room being warm, while a tempest of rain and snow raged without. The poor swallow felt, indeed, a temporary warmth, and then escaped out of the room. "Such," says he, "is the life of man; but what goes before, or what comes after, is buried in profound darkness. Our ignorance then, upon such principles as hitherto we have embraced, is confessed; but if this new doctrine really teach us any thing more certain, it will deserve to be followed." These and similar reflections being made by the king's counsellors, Coifi expressed a desire to hear Paulinus preach, which, by the king's direction, he did. The chief priest having heard him, exclaimed: "I knew formerly that what we worshipped was nothing; because the more studiously I sought for truth, the less I found of it. Now I openly declare, that in this preaching appears the truth which is able to afford us life, salvation, and eternal bliss. I advise that we instantly destroy the temples and altars which we have served in vain." "The king asked Coifi, who should be the first man that should profane the idolatrous places. I ought to do it," replied the priest; "I, who worshipped them in folly, will give an example to others in destroying them, by the wisdom given me from the true God." He immediately went to the temple and profaned it, and ordered the building, with its inclosures, to be burnt. The king, with his nobles, and very many of the commonalty, were baptised<sup>1</sup>.

Paulinus, the first bishop of York, continued for six years to preach the Gospel, till the death of Edwin; and "as many," is the expression of Bede, "as were ordained to eternal life, believed." "We know," observes Mr. Milner, "whence he borrowed these words; but it is not so easy to say how he applied them, as to the evidences of the Christian faith required of these converts." So strong, however, was the desire of Edwin's subjects for Christianity, that Paulinus, coming with the king and queen to a royal villa called Adregin, spent there thirty-six days

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 627.

in teaching and baptising from morning till night. Edwin induced the king of the East Angles to embrace the Gospel, and a bishopric was founded at Dummock, now Dunwich, in Suffolk. Paulinus preached also with success in Lincolnshire. Edwin, at length, fell in battle, and the queen retired into Kent with Paulinus, who was made bishop of Rochester, which see he held till the time of his death. The church of Northumberland was in a deplorable state, but it was afterwards restored by Aidan, a missionary from Ireland, not of the Roman communion, but of the ancient British church. A missionary from Rome, named Byrinus, had, in the mean time, introduced Christianity among the West Saxons, and established the see of Dorcinca, now Dorchester, near Oxford. Mercia, brought into the pale of the Christian church by a marriage of its king into a Christian family, was the last of the Saxon kingdoms which renounced their idols, if we except London and the East Angles; and these at length, through the influence of this king of Mercia, were again brought back to the religion which they had renounced.

It is recorded of Kentigern, bishop of Glasgow, that having been expelled from his see, he founded a bishopric and monastery on the banks of the river Elwy, in North Wales. This abbey is reported to have had 965 monks, of whom one of the name of Asaph, a zealous preacher, succeeded and left his name to the see.

The churches of England supplied many zealous missionaries, who, at the beginning of the eighth century, propagated the Gospel in Germany; especially Winfrid, afterwards Boniface, archbishop of Mentz. With recommendatory letters from the bishop of Winchester, he appeared before Gregory II. at Rome, and received from him an ample commission<sup>1</sup>. He laboured with success in Bavaria, Thuringia, and Friezeland. Willibrod, and other Englishmen, had preceded him, with several more, some of whom fell as martyrs. Winfrid, as directed by Gregory, proceeded to Hesse and the East of Germany, where, after enduring every hardship which falls to the lot of the missionary in heathen and uncivilised countries, he was eminently successful, and returning to Rome, was by the pope appointed bishop of the German churches, under the name of Boniface. With a fresh supply of English missionaries he returned to the scene of his labours, being protected also by the authority of Charles

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 719.

Martel, whose power extended to a considerable part of Germany. From Gregory III. he received the title of Archbishop of Mentz, and he erected several bishoprics in the neighbouring countries. In the fortieth year after his entrance into Germany, while on a mission which he had undertaken to confirm the churches, Boniface was murdered by the pagans of Friezeland; and with their renowned leader fell fifty-two of his priests and companions<sup>1</sup>. The German Christians collected an army, and cruelly revenged his death. Those who remained pagans, in Friezeland, were glad to obtain peace by submitting to the Christian rites. Many zealous missionaries entered into the labours of Boniface, especially from the English churches. But it is to be lamented, that after this period military expeditions and violence mark the progress of the profession of Christianity. The sword of Charlemagne completed the conversion of Germany, and the conversion was such as might be expected. "Alcuin, the favourite of Charles, laments, that more pains were taken to exact from the Saxons the payment of tithes, than to inform them of the nature of true religion." Charlemagne beheaded 4000 Saxons in one day, and issued edicts, pronouncing the pain of death against those who refused baptism, or who even ate flesh during Lent.

We may therefore briefly describe the state of the external profession of Christianity, during this period, in the West. The church of Rome, formerly so faithful, was leading the way in the introduction of every species of superstition; zealously contending for the worship of images and relics, and aiming at the establishment of a spiritual monarchy over the churches and nations. France was sunk to the lowest point of barbaric ignorance. The churches of Spain, though not behind in superstition, retained somewhat more of decency. In the British isles and in Germany, as has been remarked, the missionary character of the church still having to make its way among hostile pagans, must have kept its ministers in a great degree of at least moral purity. But every where the public profession of the religion of Christ was debased by extreme ignorance and superstition, growing idolatry, and false doctrine. These clouds of darkness had, indeed, long been rising, century after century; but now they had overspread almost the whole face of the heavens. We have an estimate of what was now required to form the Christian character, in a writing still extant<sup>2</sup>, of Eligius, or Eloi, bishop

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 755.

<sup>2</sup> See the original in Mosheim.

of Noyon, in the seventh century. “He is a good Christian, who comes frequently to church, who brings an oblation which may be offered to God on the altar, who does not taste of the fruits of the soil until he has offered some to God;” “who, lastly, can repeat the Creed or the Lord’s Prayer.” “Redeem your souls from punishment while you have the remedies in your power—offer oblations and tithes in the churches, according to your means—place lighted candles in the sanctuaries—come very frequently to the church, and implore the protection of the saints”—“for if you observe these things, you may come securely, at the day of judgment, before the tribunal of the Eternal Judge, and say, ‘Give, Lord, for we have given<sup>1</sup>.’”

## SECT. II.

If, pursuing our history of these *dark* ages,—not only of religion, but of human civilisation,—from the reign of Charlemagne to the end of the fifteenth century, we make another break at the end of the twelfth century, we shall have passed the midnight of this religious and moral darkness. “France, indeed,” Mr. Hallam observes, “had reached her lowest point at the beginning of the eighth century;” but England was at that time more respectable, and did not fall into complete degradation till the middle of the ninth. There could be nothing more deplorable than the state of letters in Italy and in England during the succeeding century; but France seems to have been uniformly, though very slowly, progressive, from the time of Charlemagne.

With the civil history of this period the church of Christ is but little concerned; and not much more indeed with that of the ecclesiastical state, except as these powers made war upon her, and held her in bondage.

Under the successor of Charlemagne<sup>2</sup>, Louis the Debonair, “the mighty structure of his father’s power began rapidly to decay.” The partition of the empire followed among his sons, Lothaire, Louis, and Charles the Bald. In about forty years the empire, for a short period, was nearly united under Charles the Fat. From the time of his deposition<sup>3</sup>, Italy was a scene of contest among her native princes. Germany was soon lost to

<sup>1</sup> “Qui toties sanctæ solemnitates adveniunt, ante dies plures castitatem etiam cum propriâ uxore custodit, ut securâ conscientia Domini altare accedere posset.”

<sup>2</sup> A.D. 814.

<sup>3</sup> A.D. 887.

the descendants of Charlemagne. Two usurpers seized and divided Burgundy. In France, the Carolingian kings continued for another century; "but their line was interrupted two or three times by the election or usurpation of a powerful family, the counts of Paris and Orleans, who ended, like the old mayors of the palace, in dispersing the phantoms of royalty they had professed to serve. Hugh Capet, the representative of this house, upon the death of Louis V. placed himself upon the throne; thus founding the third and most permanent race of French sovereigns." "These were times of great misery to the people, and perhaps the worst that Europe has ever known." "When the restraining power of Charlemagne was removed, the nobles became so many petty sovereigns in their respective territories, and brought the scourge of tyranny and oppression home to every man's door. The South was exposed to the continual ravages of the Saracens, who were masters of the Mediterranean. Germany was assailed by the Slavonians, who occupied the countries of Bohemia, Poland, and Pannonia. Their language is still spoken upon half the surface of Europe. All Italy, all Germany, and the South of France, felt this scourge; till Henry the Fowler, and Otho the Great, drove them back to their own limits, where, in a short time, they learned peaceful arts, adopted the religion, and followed the policy of Christendom."

The Norman pirates were a scourge equally dreadful. France was reduced to the lowest point of depression by their predatory excursions. Charles the Simple at length ceded to them the country afterwards called Normandy<sup>1</sup>, and Rollo and his followers became Christians, according to the fashion of the age. Hence, a new cup of affliction, and a long source of suffering to England. The same northern pirates, called by us Danes, had long miserably harassed and struggled with the Anglo-Saxons for the sovereignty of this island. William, a descendant of Rollo, from Normandy, completed its final subjection<sup>2</sup>, and introduced an almost total change in the nobility and landed proprietors in the kingdom; but the obtruders were not absorbed into the common mass of the people till about the time of Edward III.

The continual wars<sup>3</sup>, which lasted, with little intermission, for three centuries and a half, between the Norman kings of England and the sovereigns of the French monarchy, form the leading feature of French history during these ages.

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 918.

<sup>2</sup> A.D. 1066.

<sup>3</sup> A.D. 1108.

Before the end of the twelfth century, the Spaniards had recovered much ground from the Moors. Toledo and Saragossa had fallen into their hands, and the foundations of the kingdoms of Leon and Castile, and of Arragon, had been laid.

The five nations of Germany, after their separation<sup>1</sup> from France, elected as their sovereign, Conrad<sup>2</sup>, duke of Franconia; and on his death<sup>3</sup>, Henry the Fowler, duke of Saxony, ancestor of the three Othos, who followed him in direct succession. Otho I. conquered Italy<sup>4</sup>, and recovered the imperial title. On the death of Henry<sup>5</sup>, duke of Bavaria, Germany, with the titular empire, passed into the family of Franconia. From Conrad II., the first of this house, sprang three successive emperors, Henry III.<sup>6</sup> IV.<sup>7</sup> and V.<sup>8</sup> On the extinction of this house<sup>9</sup>, Lothaire, duke of Saxony, was elevated to the throne; and on his death, Conrad III.<sup>10</sup> of the house of Swabia, to whom succeeded Frederic Barbarossa<sup>11</sup>. In the contests between the two houses of Saxony and Swabia, originated the parties of the Guelfs and Gibelins, whose mutual struggles occupy a considerable space in the civil history of these times.

Italy, divided into a number of small states, interests us only as being the seat of the supreme pontiff, or head of the ecclesiastic state, which had its branches in every nation of the divided empire, and soon erected upon the seven hills of Rome a new spiritual monarchy, which rendered her again 'the city that ruled over the kings of the earth.' In the ninth century, the ecclesiastical estate had not concentrated all its power in the pope and see of Rome, but exercised it in great encroachment on the civil power, in the several national synods of the bishops. Mr. Hallam approves the remark, "that the ninth century was the age of bishops, as the eleventh and twelfth were of the popes."

He produces, as a proof of this, the conduct of the prelates to the descendants of Charlemagne. An assembly of bishops declared Lothaire unworthy to reign. Another declared that Charles the Bald had forfeited his crown. He quotes the words of this prince. "No one ought to have degraded me from the throne to which I was consecrated, until at least I had been heard and judged by the bishops, through whose ministry I was consecrated — who are called the thrones of God, in which God

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 888.<sup>2</sup> A.D. 911.<sup>3</sup> A.D. 919.<sup>4</sup> A.D. 962.<sup>5</sup> A.D. 1024.<sup>6</sup> A.D. 1039.<sup>7</sup> A.D. 1056.<sup>8</sup> A.D. 1106.<sup>9</sup> A.D. 1125.<sup>10</sup> A.D. 1138.<sup>11</sup> A.D. 1152.



sitteth, and by whom He dispenses His judgments; to whose paternal chastisement I was willing to submit, and do still submit myself." He instances also the intolerable outrage of spiritual tyranny shewn towards Edwy, by Archbishop Otho and St. Dunstan; and the assertion of the bishop of Winchester, during the civil wars of Stephen and Matilda, "that it pertained chiefly to the order of clergy to elect the king." "It seemed," says this historian, "as if Europe was about to pass under as absolute a domination of the hierarchy, as had been exercised by the priesthood of ancient Egypt, or the Druids of Gaul."

The Roman catholic clergy, however, who had already surrendered much of their independence, were induced, during the period of which we are treating, to clothe their chief pastor with the imperial purple, and to support his empire over the church, as the representative of Christ himself. The Gallican church made for some time a spirited, though unavailing struggle against this rising despotism. The exemption of monasteries from episcopal jurisdiction, which now began to be common, added much to the direct power of the pope. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, whole orders of monks were declared exempt, at a single stroke; and thus the Roman pontiff had armies at his command, in every district of his spiritual empire, which were ready to give effect to his decrees, against the interest both of the clergy and laity; and the greatest sovereigns were soon made to feel that the threats of the Vatican were not to be despised.

The chief weapon of this spiritual warfare was the sentence of excommunication, which, in its origin, was the mere exclusion of an individual from the external privileges of the Christian community, but to which, through superstition and priestcraft, most dreadful civil penalties now attached. The excommunicated person was in fact outlawed, and might be retained in prison till he obtained absolution. In some countries, his property might be confiscated. In the general estimation of mankind he was an object of abhorrence, and was shunned by friends and attendants like a person infected with leprosy. It is reported of Robert, king of France, when under this sentence, that only two servants remained with him, and that these threw into the fire all the meats which had been placed on his table. To hold any intercourse with an excommunicated person, was prohibited under pain of the lesser excommunication, which excluded from sacred rites, and subjected to penance. In some places, a bier was set before the door of the person under sen-



tence, and his windows were assailed with stones ; a very ancient expression, it should seem, of popular indignation. The Roman policy had contrived to extend this dreadful penalty over whole districts and nations. For the offence of the ruler, all his territories, with his vassals or subjects, were placed under an interdict. At the command of the pope, or bishop, the churches were shut up, the bells unstrung, and the funeral and other sacred rites prohibited, except baptism and extreme unction. " This was the mainspring of the machinery that the clergy set in motion, the lever by which they moved the world. From the moment that these interdicts and excommunications had been tried, the powers of the earth might be said to have existed only by sufferance<sup>1</sup>."

Rome was now in a state to command universal submission, but the extension of her dominion was long checked by her private calamities, and the extreme viciousness of her pontiffs. For more than a hundred and fifty years the annals of the papacy are filled up with a series of revolutions and crimes. Six popes were deposed, two murdered, one mutilated. Frequently two or even three competitors appeared together, and alternately drove one another from the city. This corruption of the head extended naturally to all the other members of the church. Writers concur universally in stigmatising the dissoluteness and neglect of decency that prevailed among the clergy. The mask of hypocrisy, indeed, through the pride of success, was too much laid aside, to command the respect of the most superstitious. The secular clergy were already sunk low in the reverence of the people, but the regulars, or monastic orders, still preserved at least appearances ; and though they were, in fact, much degenerated from the original strictness of their rules, by their " voluntary humility," their fastings and watchings, and all the specious impostures of self-mortification, they still kept up the show of superior piety, and long retained the admiration of the people.

The detail of the violent disputes and contests respecting the celibacy of the clergy, and the investitures of benefices, hardly falls within the purpose of this history, though they intimately concern the rise and progress of the papal empire. Suffice it to say, that in the eleventh century, the famous Hildebrand<sup>2</sup>, afterwards Gregory VII., restored the discipline, and extended the claims of the see of Rome ; and he so far pre-

<sup>1</sup> Hallam.

<sup>2</sup> A.D. 1073.

vailed in his contest with the German emperor, that having, by a solemn sentence, not only excommunicated, but deposed him from his throne, he brought him as an humble suppliant to sue for absolution, and made him wait for three successive days, from morning to evening, in a woollen shirt, and with naked feet, in the outer court of the castle where he was. Gregory VII. and his immediate successors, carried the claims of the church to the utmost. But the epocha when the spirit of papal usurpation was most strikingly displayed, was the pontificate of Innocent III.<sup>1</sup> In each of the three leading objects which Rome had pursued—independent sovereignty—supremacy over the Christian church—and control over the princes of the earth, it was the fortune of this pontiff to conquer<sup>2</sup>.

### SECT. III.

In proceeding with the secular history of the last three centuries of this religious and intellectual darkness, the more settled state of the kingdoms of the Roman catholic world, renders it unnecessary that we should attend to their domestic concerns, in order to illustrate the history of the church of Christ. They were, upon the whole, in a progressive state of improvement, as to their temporal concerns; but with respect to religion, every corruption was at its utmost height; and though, as we shall see hereafter, testimonies more and more clear and efficient were borne against the abomination which had desolated the church, it was long before any sensible impression was made upon those who governed the opinions of mankind.

“The noon-day of papal dominion,” observes Mr. Hallam, “extends from the pontificate of Innocent III. inclusively, to that of Boniface VIII.; or, in other words, through the thirteenth century. Rome inspired, during this age, all the terror of her ancient name. She was once more the mistress of the world, and its kings were her vassals.” “The general supremacy of the Roman church over mankind,” “derived material support from the promulgation of the canon law, and a new set of legal practitioners, which the study of it had raised up.” This was a regular and copious system of jurisprudence, derived in a great measure from the civil law of Justinian. “The superiority of ecclesiastical to temporal

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 1194—1216.

<sup>2</sup> Hallam.

power, or at least the absolute independence of the former, may be considered as a sort of key-note, that regulates every passage of the canon law, which was “almost entirely founded on the legislative authority of the popes.” Hence, the canonists were among the most strenuous supporters of the papacy, both from the habit of their studies, and the interest of their profession.

The institution of the mendicant or begging friars, in the beginning of the thirteenth century, is by all writers considered as one great cause that contributed to uphold the power of the Roman see. The acquisition of wealth and its natural consequences, had operated, not only upon the secular clergy, but also upon the ancient monastic orders, to the neglect of that voluntary humiliation and austerity of manners, in self-mortification, and the renouncing of worldly enjoyments, which are far more commanding over the superstitious veneration of the vulgar and ignorant, than the influence even of power and riches. This had been seen in the progress made by the sects that now stood in opposition to the Roman hierarchy. The genius of the papacy, wise in its generation, contrived a remedy for this; or, to speak in Scriptural language, the “prince of darkness,” not exhausted in his artifices to support his reign, had a “deceivableness of unrighteousness” ready at hand, to delude those who were beginning to grow dissatisfied under the galling yoke of their spiritual tyrants—now, to many, more an object of envy on account of their earthly possessions, than of any fixed principle of religious veneration.

This contrivance was, the institution of new orders of monks or friars, who should embrace voluntary poverty, be capable of acquiring no property, but subsist on alms and the charity of the people. The two most celebrated of these orders, were the Dominicans and the Franciscans, called after their founders, St. Dominic and St. Francis of Assisa, and established by the authority of Pope Honorius III.<sup>1</sup> “These great reformers, who have produced so extraordinary an effect upon mankind, were of very different characters; the one, active and ferocious, had taken a prominent part in the crusade against the unfortunate Albigeois, and was among the first who bore the terrible name of inquisitor; while the other, a harmless enthusiast, pious and sincere, but hardly of a sane mind, was much rather accessory to the intellectual than to the moral

<sup>1</sup> A D. 1216 and 1223.

degradation of his species. Various other orders of mendicant friars were instituted in the thirteenth century; but most of them were soon suppressed; and besides the two principal, none remain but the Augustines and the Carmelites<sup>1</sup>."

These new itinerants, enlisted into the armies of the papacy, were also known by the name of "preaching friars;" no doubt, in distinction from the established clergy, who had become very sparing of these labours among the people. Nor, in the temper of the times, were they less acceptable to the multitudes who thronged to hear their sermons, by inveighing freely against the supineness and corruption of their spiritual guides. "They practised all the stratagems of itinerancy, preaching in the public streets, and administering the communion on a portable altar. Thirty years after their institution, an historian complains that the parish churches were deserted, that none confessed except to these friars; in short, that the regular discipline was subverted<sup>2</sup>." But all this was rendered conducive, through the policy of Rome, to her increase of power and wealth, by the protection and indulgences which her pontiffs afforded them. In spite of all the opposition of the bishops and clergy, and of the university of Paris, which continued to be urged against them till almost the end of the thirteenth century, Rome was always their friend, and Boniface VIII. peremptorily established the privileges and immunities of these mendicant orders<sup>3</sup>.

A great source of influence and emolument was also found by the Roman pontiffs, in their assumed right to grant dispensations for marriage, within the prohibited decrees of consanguinity; and, in certain cases, to release from the obligation of oaths. "Two principles are laid down in the decretals, that an oath disadvantageous to the church is not binding; and that one extorted by force was of slight obligation, and might be annulled by ecclesiastical authority:" principles of immense practical importance in the history of Roman Catholic Europe<sup>4</sup>.

"It must appear, I think," observes Mr. Hallam, "to every careful inquirer, that the papal authority, though manifesting outwardly more show of strength every year, had been secretly undermined, and lost a great deal of its hold upon public

<sup>1</sup> Hallam, Mosheim.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. Paris, in Hallam.

<sup>3</sup> A.D. 1295.

<sup>4</sup> "Juramentum contra utilitatem ecclesiasticam præstitum non tenet."—See note in Hallam.

opinion, before the accession of Boniface VIII., in 1294, to the pontifical throne. The clergy were rendered sullen by demands of money, invasions of the legal right of patronage, and unreasonable partiality to the mendicant orders. A part of the mendicants themselves had begun to declaim against the corruptions of the papal court; while the laity, subjects and sovereigns alike, looked upon both the head and the members of the hierarchy with jealousy and dislike. Boniface, full of inordinate arrogance and ambition, and not sufficiently sensible of this gradual change in human opinion, endeavoured to strain to a higher pitch the despotic pretensions of former pontiffs. As Gregory VII. seems the most usurping of mankind, till we read the history of Innocent III., so Innocent III. is thrown into the shade by the superior audacity of Boniface VIII."

Not long after the elevation of this pontiff, however, the two most powerful sovereigns of Europe, Philip of France and Edward I. of England, began at the same moment to attack the revenues of the church in a very arbitrary manner. Where the pope tried to resist the French king, he failed in the contest. That monarch even contrived to seize the person of the pontiff; and, after his death, the see of Rome never vindicated its honour. From that epocha, "slowly, like the retreat of water, or the stealthy pace of old age," says Mr. Hallam, "that extraordinary power over human opinion has been subsiding for five centuries."

In the beginning of the fourteenth century<sup>1</sup>, Clement V., at the instigation, it is commonly supposed, of the king of France, by whose influence he had been elected, took the extraordinary step of removing the papal chair to Avignon. In this city it remained for more than seventy years, chiefly under the influence of France. During this period, a contest with the emperor, Louis of Bavaria, marks the decreasing influence of the papacy. Some public writers of this century, as Dante, Ockham, and Marsilius of Padua, exposed the insufficiency of the foundations on which the edifice of the pope's temporal authority was built. Some wild fanatics also, of the Franciscan order, who had seceded from the main body, on account of certain alleged deviations from the rigour of their primitive rules, being cruelly persecuted by the pope, began to proclaim aloud the corruption of the church, and fixed the name of Anti-

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 1305.

christ upon the papacy. In the mean time, the popes who sat at Avignon continued to invade, with surprising rapaciousness, the patronage and revenues of the church, which raised still more the spirit of resistance.

After the Avignon residence followed the great schism in the papacy, "an event the most remarkable, except the Reformation, in its history." The cardinals, of whom the majority were French, being assembled at Rome, in conclave, for the election of a pope, were disturbed by a tumultuous populace, who demanded a Roman, or, at least, an Italian pope. The people were satisfied with the election of Urban VI. The cardinals announced their choice to the absent members of their college, and for several weeks behaved towards Urban as their pope; but becoming offended at his temper, they withdrew to a neighbouring town, protested against his election as compulsory, and elected Clement VII. Urban remained at Rome, and Clement resumed the station at Avignon, sharing between them, in nearly equal proportions, the obedience of Europe. This division of the papacy, as well as the mutual opposition of the rival popes to each other, greatly weakened its authority. A council held at Pisa<sup>1</sup>, with the design to heal this schism, ended with adding a third to the rival pontiffs. A general council called at Constance<sup>2</sup>, deposed the pope that summoned them, as well as his two competitors, and raised Martin V. to the papal chair.

Thus was shewn to the world a power in the ecclesiastical state, which was superior to the papal, and the re-appearances of which have required all the artifices of subsequent popes to prevent or control it, and have encouraged a new set of political reformers within the Roman Catholic body, who are for regulating the papacy by law, and setting bounds to it. But in a council held at Basle<sup>3</sup>, though the most determined measures were adopted, the court of Rome finally prevailed. "The principal European nations determined," however, "with different degrees, indeed, of energy, to make a stand against the despotism of Rome. In this resistance, England was not only the first engaged, but the most consistent; her free parliament preventing, as far as the times permitted, that wavering policy to which a court is liable." "England was under the influence of a peculiar hostility to the clergy, arising from the dissemination of the principles of Wickliff. All ecclesiastical pos-

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 1409.

<sup>2</sup> A.D. 1414.

<sup>3</sup> A.D. 1433.

sessions were marked for spoliation by the system of this reformer; and the house of commons more than once endeavoured to carry it into effect, pressing Henry IV. to seize the temporalities of the church for public exigencies."

"From the principles established during the schism, and in the Pragmatic Sanction of Bourges, arose the far-famed liberties of the Gallican church, which honourably distinguished her from the other members of the Roman communion." "These liberties depended upon two maxims; one, that the pope does not possess any direct or indirect temporal authority; the other, that his spiritual jurisdiction can only be exercised in conformity to such parts of the canon law as are received by the kingdom of France."

In Germany, the artifices of the court of Rome prevailed, to increase her exactions. "But she purchased too dearly her triumph over the weakness of Frederic III.; and the Hundred Grievances of Germany, presented to Adrian VI. by the diet of Nuremberg, in 1522, manifested the workings of a long-treasured resentment, that had made straight the path before the Saxon reformer."

"While the bishops of Rome were losing their general influence over Europe, they did not gain more estimation in Italy." "In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the popes degraded their character by too much anxiety about the politics of Italy. The veil woven by religious awe was rent asunder, and the features of ordinary ambition appeared without disguise. For it was no longer that magnificent and original system of spiritual power, which made Gregory VII., even in exile, a rival of the emperor; which held forth redress where the law could not protect, and punishment where it could not chastise; which fell in sometimes with superstitious feelings, and sometimes with political interest. Many might believe that the pope could depose a schismatic prince, who were disgusted at his attacking an unoffending neighbour. As the cupidity of the clergy, in regard to worldly estate, had lowered their character every where, so similar conduct of their head undermined the respect felt for him in Italy. The censures of the church, those excommunications and interdicts which had made Europe tremble, became gradually despicable as well as odious, when they were lavished in every squabble for territory which the pope was pleased to make his own."

The concluding remarks of Mr. Hallam on 'the ecclesiastical power,' are well worthy of attention. "Five centuries



have now elapsed, during every one of which the authority of the Roman see has successively declined. Slowly and silently receding from their claims to temporal power, the pontiffs hardly protect their dilapidated citadel from the revolutionary concussions of modern times, the rapacity of governments, and the growing averseness to ecclesiastical influence. But if thus bearded by unmannerly and threatening innovation, they should occasionally forget that cautious policy which necessity has proscribed, if they should attempt an unavailing expedient, to revive institutions which can be no longer operative, or principles that have died away, their defensive efforts will not be unnatural, nor ought to excite either indignation or alarm. A calm, comprehensive study of ecclesiastical history, not in such scraps and fragments as ordinary partisans of our ephemeral literature obtrude upon us, is perhaps the best antidote to extravagant apprehensions. Those who know what Rome has once been, are best able to appreciate what she is ; those who have seen the thunderbolt in the hands of the Gregories and the Innocents, will hardly be intimidated at the sallies of decrepitude, the impotent dart of Priam amidst the crackling ruins of Troy<sup>1</sup>."

### CHAPTER THE THIRD.

#### HISTORY OF THE FAITHFUL REMNANT IN THE WEST, DURING THE MIDDLE AGES.

##### SECT. I.

WE now return to trace the peculiar object of this history, the remnant of true believers, for whose sakes we have just recorded a short summary of the most remarkable revolutions and occurrences in that part of the world where they are supposed chiefly to have sojourned. And we have in particular marked the origin and growth of that ' Novel Power,' which so long made war against the saints, and overcame them, and which had been clearly predicted in the Scriptures, especially in the prophecies of Daniel and of the Revelation. In returning to our subject, we cannot but be struck with the scantiness of the materials which remain, directly bearing on the point we would investigate. But besides the common cause that may be assigned

<sup>1</sup> History of the Middle Ages, vol. ii. p. 124.

for this silence of general history concerning the annals of the poor, and the records of private life, where, for the most part, true religion is wont to manifest itself, we should be aware of a particular reason which may be expected to throw additional obscurity over this subject, in that particular period of history now under review.

It was signified by the Spirit of Prophecy, that there should come a season when the mystic woman, who had brought forth the man-child,—emblematical of the church after the nativity, when she receives the promised seed,—“ would have given to her the wings of an eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she should be nourished ” “ for the space of twelve hundred and sixty years.” This seems to denote a more than ordinary concealment of the Holy Catholic church. That spiritual communion is, indeed, never an object completely defined to the sight, nor does it ever coincide exactly with the boundaries of the visible external church in the purest of times. She is always existing, however, to the eye of faith, sometimes indeed rendered discoverable, more or less, by the spiritual deeds of her children, and always known, in virtue of Christ’s promise, not to have actually perished before the gates of hell. But now her abode is ‘ the wilderness ;’ there she is nourished in secret, no longer ‘ counted among the nations ;’ and her children may be expected to be met with less frequently among the haunts of men—as strangers in disguise—or, as another Scripture has told us, as “ witnesses ” “ that shall prophesy clothed in sackcloth.”

It belongs not to this work to discuss the important question, When the date of this mysterious prophecy is to be fixed, or whether the thousand years of which we are now treating, fall, with respect to their commencement, within the limits of its twelve hundred and sixty years? I should rather incline to suppose, however, that this is the fact; and if, in treating of the rise and growth of the popedom, I have failed to mark, in the conflict, the precise time, and by whose hand, ‘ the abomination of desolation ’ was fixed in the holy place, our attention is soon awakened to the fact, that the colours of Antichrist are actually flying on the battlements of the temple, and that the new Gentile idolaters have already begun to trample under foot the holy city, which they had so long besieged.

Mr. Milner, who dates the commencement of this sad period later than most writers on this subject, observes, that “ Idolatry, spiritual tyranny, and the doctrine of the merit of works, the three discriminating marks of the papacy, had,” at the beginning

of the seventh century, “as yet no settled establishment at Rome.” How abject the spirit of superstition was in the age of Gregory, is sufficiently evident! At what period it became idolatrous in the eye of God, perhaps it is not for us to say; the manifestation of the spiritual *tyrant* is reserved, probably; for the longer confirmed dominion of the foe who has already fought and conquered. And as for ‘*the doctrine of the merit of works*,’ it had, long before this period, impaired the benevolence of the Christian system, and in many hearts had overturned the foundation of the faith. And in measuring the reign of Antichrist, we are perhaps to take into the account, not only the erection of the papacy — the masterpiece of the deceivableness of iniquity — but also much more of the general apostacy of the Christian church, which prepared the way for ‘the man of sin,’ and gave rise to him. In the notes below, taken from a most judicious protestant writer of our own church, it will appear, how widely extended has been that doctrine of merits, on which the papacy is built, as its foundation.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “They — the Roman catholics — teach, as we do, that although Christ, as God, be the efficient, and as man, the meritorious cause of our justice, yet in us also there is something required. God is the cause of our natural life; in Him we live: but He quickeneth not the body without the soul in the body. Christ has merited to make us just: but as a medicine which is made for health, doth not heal by being made, but by being applied; so, by the merits of Christ there can be no justification without the application of His merit. Thus far we join hands with the church of Rome.

“Wherein then do we disagree? We disagree about the nature and essence of the medicine whereby Christ cureth our disease; about the manner of applying it; about the number and the power of means, which God requireth in us for the effectual applying thereof to our soul’s comfort.” “Can any man that hath read their books concerning this matter be ignorant how they draw all their answers unto these heads.” “That the remission of all our sins, the pardon of all whatsoever punishments thereby deserved, the rewards which God hath laid up in heaven, are, by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, purchased and obtained sufficiently for all men; but for no man effectually for his benefit in particular, except the blood of Christ be applied particularly to him, by such means as God has appointed that to work by. That those means, of themselves, being but dead things, only the blood of Christ is that which putteth life, force, and efficacy in them to work, and to be available, each in his kind, to our salvation. Finally, that grace being purchased for us by the blood of Christ, and freely, without any merit at the first bestowed upon us, the good things which we do after grace received, be thereby made satisfactory and meritorious.” “Their doctrine is, that as pure water of itself hath no savour, but if it pass through a sweet pipe, it taketh a pleasant smell of the pipe through which it passeth; so, although before grace received our works do neither satisfy nor merit, yet, after, they do both the one and the other.” “In meriting our actions do work with both hands; with one they get their morning stipend, the increase of grace; with the other

And according to this representation, the ‘doctrine of the merit of works,’ as opposed to the doctrine of justification by faith, taught in all sound Protestant churches, had an early

their evening hire, the everlasting crown of glory. Indeed, they teach that our good works do not these things as they come from us, but as they come from grace in us; which ‘grace in us’ is another thing in their divinity than is THE MERE GOODNESS OF GOD’S MERCY TOWARDS US IN CHRIST JESUS. If it were not a long-deluded spirit which hath possession of their hearts, were it possible but that they should see how plainly they do herein gainsay the very ground of apostolic faith? Is this that ‘salvation by grace,’ whereof so plentiful mention is made in the Scriptures of God? Was this their meaning, which first taught the world to look for salvation only by Christ? *By grace*, says the apostle, and by grace in such sort as a gift; a thing that cometh not of ourselves, nor of our works, ‘lest any man should boast,’ and say, *I have wrought out my salvation*. By grace they confess; but by grace in such sort, that as many as wear the diadem of bliss, they wear nothing but what they won.” “When they,” the Roman catholics, “are required to shew what the righteousness is whereby a Christian man is justified, they answer, that it is ‘a divine quality:’ which quality, received into the soul, doth first make it one of them who are born of God: and secondly, endue it with power to bring forth such works as they do that are born of Him; even as the soul of man, being joined to his body, doth first make him to be of the number of reasonable creatures; and secondly, enable him to perform the natural functions which are proper to his kind: that it maketh the soul amiable and gracious in the sight of God, in regard whereof it is called grace; that it purgeth, purifieth, and washeth out the stains and pollutions of sins; that by it, through the merit of Christ, we are delivered from sin, so from eternal death and condemnation, the reward of sin. This grace they will have to be applied by infusion; to the end, that as the body is warmed by the heat which is in the body, so the soul might be righteous by inherent grace, which grace they make capable of increase; as the body may be more and more warm, so the soul more and more justified, according as grace should be augmented; the augmentation whereof is merited by good works, as good works are made meritorious by it. Wherefore the first receipt of grace in their divinity is, the first justification: the increase thereof, the second justification; as grace may be increased by the merit of good works, so it may be diminished by the demerit of sins venial, and may be lost by mortal sin. Inasmuch, therefore, as it is needful in the one case to repair, in the other to recover the loss that is made, the infusion of grace has her sundry after-meals; for the which cause they make many ways to apply the infusion of grace. It is applied to infants through baptism, without either faith or works, and in them really it taketh away original sin, and the punishment due unto it; it is applied to infidels and wicked men in the first justification through baptism, without works, yet not without faith; and it taketh away sins both actual and original, together with all whatsoever punishment, eternal or temporal, thereby deserved. Unto such as have attained the first justification, that is to say, the first receipt of grace, it is applied farther by good works to the increase of former grace, which is the second justification. If they work more and more, grace doth more increase, and they are more and more justified. To such as diminish it by venial sins, it is applied by holy water, Ave Marias, crossings, papal salutations, and such like, which serve for reparations of grace decayed. To such as have lost it through mortal

place in the Catholic church, long before she entertained Pelagian notions, which, in a great measure, she afterwards did ; and the disciples of Augustin, who really possessed that inherent righteousness which the Spirit of God begins to work in every true Christian, not clearly understanding that this effect of converting grace was not the righteousness by which they were

sin, it is applied by the sacrament (as they call it) of penance : which sacrament has force to confer grace on men, yet in such sort, as being so conferred, it has not altogether so much power as at first ; for it only cleanseth out the stain or guilt of sin committed, and changeth the punishment eternal into temporal satisfactory punishment here, if time do serve ; if not, hereafter to be endured, except it be lightened by masses, works of charity, pilgrimages, fasts, and such like ; or else shortened by pardon for term, or by plenary pardon quite removed and taken away. *This is the mystery of the man of sin. This maze the church of Rome doth cause her followers to tread, when they ask her the way to justification.*"

This doctrine of merit, therefore, or of "justification by infused and inherent righteousness," on which the whole system of popery is built, is certainly to be ascribed more or less to all the fathers, since the time of Justin Martyr or of Origen. Augustin himself, of whatever benefit his works have been to the church, did not supply a sufficient remedy, because he saw not clearly the doctrine of justification by faith alone, in the finished work of a Saviour. And this "mystery of iniquity," which led to the revelation of the man of sin, had begun to work, even in the apostle's days : he points it out in the Galatian churches — they had "begun in the Spirit, but sought to be made perfect in the flesh." It was a more careful study of the Scriptures at the time of the reformation — for the ancient fathers are, in general, poor expositors of the word of God — that restored the clear knowledge of these precious doctrines to the church, which, when received in love, no longer leave the souls of men the sport of these vain delusions. For the follower of Augustin, depending upon his inherent righteousness, will no more find it sufficient for the comfort of his soul in time of trial, than the Pelagian, who takes *all* the merit to himself, or the semi-Pelagian, who divides it between grace and nature.

But true Protestantism speaketh on this wise : "Whether they speak of the first or second justification, they make the essence of a divine quality inherent, they make it righteousness which is in us. If it be in us, then it is ours as our souls are ours, though we have them of God, and can hold them no longer than pleaseth him ; for if he withdraw the breath of our nostrils, we fall to dust : but the righteousness wherein we must be found, if we will be justified, is not our own ; therefore we cannot be justified by an inherent quality. Christ has merited righteousness for as many as are found in him. In him God findeth us if we be faithful ; for by faith we are incorporated into Christ. Then, although in ourselves we be altogether sinful and unrighteous, yet even the man which is impious in himself, full of iniquity, full of sin ; him being found in Christ, through faith, and having his sin remitted through repentance — him God beholdeth with a gracious eye, putteth away his sin by not imputing it, taketh quite away the punishment due thereunto by pardoning it, and accepteth him in Jesus Christ as

justified in the sight of God, and feeling, as they would do, its deficiency in themselves, would be open to much of the superstition of the times. They would be too easily beguiled, either into the attempt to make amends for their sins by a voluntary punishment which they laid upon themselves in their austerities, or to seek an interest in the prayers and intercessions of other mediators, whom they fondly revered, as having laid up that abundance of gracious attainments which their experience and humility taught them they had not themselves obtained. Hence the adoration of saints, and a too abject dependence upon the priestly functions and ritual observances.

### SECT. I.

#### OF THE FAITHFUL REMNANT IN THE COMMUNION OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

Where then is our hope concerning those who were involved in Roman catholic corruptions? Surely, that they did it ignorantly, and that, led by the Spirit, their hearts were kept from altogether denying the foundation; and if resting in false confidence through life, that they were enabled, at last, to trust only to the mercy of God for Christ's sake. "How many of them," observes Mr. Hooker, "were known so to have ended their lives, that the drawing of their breath has ceased with the uttering of this faith, *Christ my Saviour! my Redeemer Jesus!*" After all their vain labour, they trusted not to inherent righteousness. They thought God required it of them, and mourned in bitterest penitence, that they had it not in due measure; but there is room to hope they did not, in that awful hour, trust to any other mediator, or fond delusion of their former superstition, but in the righteousness of God our Saviour alone. This is our well-grounded hope of many who have left creditable evidence that they did feel the Spirit of God within them, mortifying their corrupt affections and earthly members, and drawing their

perfectly righteous, as if he had fulfilled all that was commanded him in the law; shall I say more perfectly righteous than if himself had fulfilled the whole law? I must take heed what I say; but the apostle saith, 'God made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' Such we are in the sight of God the Father as is the very Son of God himself." "Man hath sinned, and God hath suffered:" "God hath made himself the Son of Man, and men are made the righteousness of God." — HOOKER.



minds to hunger and thirst after righteousness ; and such is the manifold mercy and grace of God, that we have some evidence of this, not only in the blind, but in the “ blind leaders of the blind ;” in those who seemed to make, as well as in those who believed the lie : for what limits are we to ascribe to the mercy of God ?

How different a spectacle is Gregory I., who certainly cherished the seeds of Antichrist, — if his hand was not upon his standard when the abomination of desolation was even now standing in the holy place — how different a spectacle is he when upholding the claims of Peter, from what we behold him, when rebuked and chastened by the hand of God in secret ! Writing to Dominicus of Carthage, he says, “ How can I sustain the last judgment, seeing so very little fruits of my labours ? Dearest brother, I implore your prayers for me : by the union of charity we have a common interest.” In a letter to another person : “ I can find nothing else to say of myself than that, as a punishment of my sins, I have been almost eleven months confined to my bed ; I am so oppressed with the gout, that life is a heavy punishment. I faint daily through pain, and breathe after death as my remedy.” Again : “ I have been nearly two years confined to my bed, in constant pain. Often have I been forced to return to my bed, when I scarcely had left it, by the violence of pain ; thus I die daily, and yet live. But I am a grievous criminal, and, as such, deservedly shut up in so painful a prison. I daily cry, with the Psalmist, ‘ Bring my soul out of prison, that I may give thanks to thy name.’ ” “ What ought we to do but to call our sins to remembrance, and to thank God that he purifies us by afflicting our flesh.” “ How many sinners have been immersed in sin through life without a headach, and have suddenly been cast into hell !” He concludes his letter, “ May the Lord infuse into your soul these words, by the inspiration of his Spirit, cleanse you from your iniquities, give you to hear the joy of his consolation, and eternal reward hereafter.”

This may surely afford us a ray of hope concerning Gregory ; and, with Mr. Hooker, we need not hesitate to say, “ I doubt not that God was merciful to save thousands of our fathers living in popish superstitions, inasmuch as they sinned ignorantly.” It is one thing, indeed, to contemplate men “ not receiving the love of the truth that they may be saved,” when the truth is laid before them, “ but having pleasure in unrighteousness — and another thing, in times of ignorance and superstition to contemplate



justified in the sight of God, and feeling, as they in given deficiency in themselves, would be open to much g in bond- of the times. They would be too easily beguiled by the truth, attempt to make amends for their sins by fasting, hungering and ment which they laid upon themselves. In a letter of Gregory I., mediators, whom they fondly revered, judicial power the priests abundance of gracious attainments, mission of the heralds of humility taught them they brought the Christ, that the believing the adoration of saints, and in regard of sin which he has priestly functions and answer to one who inquired how she her sins were forgiven her, was, "that

OF THE FAITH was not attainable: we must repent and know our sins, and apply for pardon continually." Yet he

From the specimen afforded us in the character of Gregory, we may form a judgment of many of his contemporaries and adjudicators, and may hope that many of the missionaries, who at this time were labouring in England and Germany, found, in their afflictions and distresses for the Gospel's sake, a scene for the trial of their faith, not less profitable to their souls, than Gregory did in his bed of sickness. The charity of Mr. Milner has believed that at this time "there was a real effusion of the Holy Spirit on England, so that numbers were turned from idols to the living God; that the pastors, first of the Roman, and afterwards of the British communion, laboured in the work with simplicity and success." But his observation is, "The zeal and purity of the Christian spirit seldom last much longer than thirty or forty years in any place." And how many such *lustrums* may pass, in numberless towns and villages, and leave no traces in general history, even in times of the greatest communication of intelligence!—and much more in these ages of darkness.

We are admonished also of a very interesting fact, that down to the year 716, there was an ancient church in the British Isles, among the Irish, the Scots, and Ancient Britons, which did not communicate with Rome. One point of difference, long disputed between them, was respecting the time of celebrating Easter. Some remains of this dispute are found in North Wales, as late as 809, and in West Wales, as low as 842. By these missionaries, whom the Romans counted schismatics, the greater part of England was recovered from paganism. All the North, by Aidan; the East Saxons, and the greater part of Mercia, by Finan; these came immediately from Ireland. It does not

var that the Roman missionaries considered them as differing themselves on any essential point; but Archbishop Usher, "Discourse on the religion anciently professed by the d British Churches," affords a hope, that they not only d fully the doctrines of Augustin respecting grace, but, remains of two of their writers, Sedulius, who flourished n this period, and Claudius Scotus, in 815, — that ith the Protestant churches respecting "justification .". In the former we read that the law was not might take away sin, but that it might conclude er sin; that men, being by this means humbled, might nderstand that their salvation was not in their own power, but in that of a Mediator — that by the law comes neither the remission nor the removal, but the knowledge of sin" — "our sins are gratuitously forgiven us" — "through grace we are saved by faith and not by works" — "and that therefore we are to rejoice, not in our own righteousness or learning, but in the faith of the cross, by which our sins are forgiven us" — "God has so ordered it that he will be gracious to mankind; if they believe, they shall be freed by the blood of Christ" — "that as the soul is the life of the body, so faith is the life of the soul" — "that he who believes in Christ has the perfection of the law; for as none are justified by the law, since none have fulfilled the law, except he who trusts in the promise of Christ — faith was appointed, which should be accepted for the perfection of the law, that in all things which were omitted faith might satisfy the whole law" — that this righteousness, therefore, is "not ours, nor in us, but in Christ," in whom we are considered "as members in the Head." The testimony of our adoption is, "that we have the Spirit, by which we pray and cry Abba, Father; forasmuch as none can receive so great a pledge as this but such as be sons only."

We learn from Claudius Scotus, that "The law, which was given by Moses, only shews sin — does not take it away." "The Lord God will not impose it upon the servants of righteousness, but upon the servants of sin; namely, by giving a just law to unjust men, to manifest their sins, and not to remove them; for nothing removes sins but the grace of faith which worketh by love" — that "without the merit of works our past sins are forgiven, and peace maintained [*indulta*] after pardon" — "Not in my own righteousness or learning, but in the faith of the cross, by which all my sins are pardoned," should I glory.

The death of our countryman Bede<sup>1</sup>, to whom has been attached the epithet of Venerable, is certainly edifying. He was enslaved to superstition, and devoted to Rome; but a sincere disciple of Augustin, and very industrious in the exercise of his talents. In his last illness, he was continually exclaiming, "God scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." Perceiving his end draw near, he said, "If my Maker please, I will go to him from the flesh, who, when I was not, formed me out of nothing — my soul desires to see Christ, my King, in his beauty." He sang, "Glory to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost," and expired with a sedateness, composure, and devotion, which surprised all who were present at the scene. He says, in his writings, "Such was the efficacy of the blood of Christ, that the devil, who slew Christ by a temporary death, which was not due, cannot detain in eternal death any of those who are clothed with Christ, though that eternal death be due for their sins<sup>2</sup>. In the resurrection every thing will be perfected: in the meantime, it is a great thing to keep the field and remain unconquered, though not discharged from war<sup>3</sup>."

Though apostate Rome became more and more triumphant, there wanted not witnesses who testified against her grosser abominations. In this abridgment I would only mention particularly Paulinus, bishop of Aquileia, in Italy. With other Italian bishops, he resisted the decrees of the second council of Nice, for the worship of images, which the pope had sanctioned. He affirms, that "the eucharist is a morsel or bit of bread," — "that it is spiritual life or death in the eater, as he either hath faith or hath not" — "that the blood of those who have themselves been redeemed, cannot blot out the least sin; that the expiation of iniquity is the exclusive privilege of the blood of Christ alone." "Paul is not a mediator, he is an ambassador for Christ. The Advocate is He, who being also the Redeemer, exhibits to God the Father the human nature in the unity of the person of God and man. John intercedes not, but declares that this Mediator is the propitiation for our sins." Paulinus was promoted to his bishopric in 776.

As late as 824, the actual worshipping of images was condemned in a council at Paris. Agobard, archbishop of Lyons, maintained that "we ought not to worship any image of God, except that which is God himself, his eternal Son; and that

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 735.<sup>2</sup> On Rom. v.<sup>3</sup> On chap. vii.

there is no other Mediator between God and man, except Jesus Christ, both God and man." Transubstantiation was vigorously opposed by Rabanus and Scotus Erigena, the two most learned men of the West in this century. Bertram, a monk of Corbie, being asked whether the same body which was crucified was received in the mouth of the faithful, answered : " The difference is as great as between the pledge and the thing for which the pledge is delivered ; as great as between the representation and the reality<sup>1</sup>.

But the greatest advocate for the truth, in these ages, against the idolatries and corruptions which Rome had espoused, was Claudius, bishop of Turin, who filled that see from the year 817 to 839. He stemmed with difficulty, though with success in respect to his own diocese, the torrent of the wide-spreading desolation which was fast overwhelming the churches of the West ; and according to the opinions of some authors, effectually barred the delusions of the papacy from ever penetrating certain recesses in the valleys of the Alps, where the Waldenses were afterwards found.

The consummation of the mystery of iniquity was the worship of images. The Roman church, with respect to this idolatry, was certainly the corruptor of Europe, and for some time met with considerable resistance ; but the resistance was but one of those half-measures which are sure to pave the way for the reception of the corruption opposed. Gregory I. had sanctioned the use of images and pictures in churches, but forbade their worship ; the Caroline books, published by the authority of Charlemagne, and also the Council of Frankfort, had imitated his example. This middle course, which, in a more enlightened age, might have been innocent, and possibly instructive, was, in these ages, but to supply fuel to the fire of superstition ; a fire which no admonitions could quench. The ignorant people were actually guilty of worshipping them. " When I came to Turin," says Claudius, " I found all the churches full of abominations and images ; and because I began to destroy what every one adored, every one began to open his mouth against me. They say, ' We do not believe there is any thing divine in the image ; we only reverence it in honour of the person whom it represents.' I answer, if they who have quitted the worship of devils, honour the images of the saints, they have not forsaken idols ; they have only changed their

<sup>1</sup> Milner.

names. For whether you paint upon the walls the picture of St. Peter or St. Paul, or that of Jupiter, Saturn, or Mercury, they are all dead, and are therefore now neither gods, nor apostles, nor men. If you worship Peter or Paul, you may have changed the name, but the error continues the same.” “ We have not been commanded to adore the cross, but to bear it, and deny ourselves.” “ It is a great perversion of the words, *Thou art Peter*, &c., to infer from them, that eternal life is to be gained by a journey to Rome, and by the intercession of St. Peter.” “ All these things are ridiculous, rather worthy of lamentation than of grave discussion ; but we are obliged to describe them, in opposition to fools, and to declaim against those hearts of stone whom the arrows and sentences of the Divine Word cannot pierce.” “ Why do you make the souls of multitudes the associates of devils by the worship of idols, estranging them from their Creator, and precipitating them into everlasting damnation ?” “ Ye fools who run to Rome, to seek there for the intercession of the apostle, when will ye be wise ? What would Augustin say of you, whom we have so often quoted ?”

“ Claudius, in his comment on the Epistle to the Galatians, every where asserts the equality of all the apostles with Peter ; and indeed, he always declares Jesus Christ to be the only proper head of the church. He is severe against the doctrine of human merits, and of the exaltation of traditions to a height of credibility equal to that of the Divine Word. He maintains that we are saved by faith only ; holds the fallibility of the church, and exposes the futility of praying for the dead.”

It pleased God that the bishop of Turin should bear his testimony in circumstances in which he could not be trampled upon by his enemies ; but still, in his high station, his confession was marked by the garb of *sackcloth*. “ In defending this truth,” he says, “ I am become a reproach to my neighbours ; those who see me, scoff at me, and point at me to one another. But the Father of mercies, and God of all consolation, has comforted me in my tribulations, that I may be able to comfort others who are oppressed with sorrow and affliction. I rely on the protection of Him who has armed me with the armour of righteousness and of faith, the tried shield of my eternal salvation.” Mr. Milner calls Claudius “ the first Protestant reformer.” He remarks, that “ the labours of the bishop of Turin were not in vain. In his own diocese, at least, he checked the growing evil ; and Romish writers have owned

that the valleys of Piedmont, which belonged to his bishopric, preserved his opinions in the ninth and tenth centuries ;” whence it is probable that the churches of the Waldenses were either derived, or at least received much increase and confirmation from his labours. Claudius is to be reckoned among the disciples of Augustin ; but the above-mentioned historian observes, “ as superstition, idolatry, and ignorance increased, the truly evangelical views of Augustin were more and more thrown into the shade ; and the case of Gotteschalculus shewed, that in some parts of the professing world, it was no longer permitted to a divine, to promulgate the sentiments of the bishop of Hippo with impunity.”

“ Gotteschalculus was a monk of Germany. About the year 846, he left his monastery, and went into Dalmatia and Pannonia, where he spread the doctrines of Augustin, under pretence, as was said by his enemies, of preaching the Gospel to the infidels. On his return, he remained some time in Lombardy, where he held a conference with the bishop of Vienne concerning predestination. His zeal gave offence to the bishop, who prevailed on Rabanus, the archbishop of Mentz, to undertake the confutation of the novel heresy, as it was now decreed.” Gotteschalculus was condemned, and transmitted to his metropolitan, Hincmar, archbishop of Rheims, “ as a vagabond.” “ By this prelate he was condemned as a heretic, degraded from the priesthood, and ordered to be beaten with rods and imprisoned.” — “ The injured pastor maintained, with his last breath, the doctrine for which he suffered, died in prison in the year 870, and, by order of Hincmar, was denied Christian burial. All the Roman catholic prelates, however, did not as yet agree in the condemnation of the opinions for which Gotteschalculus suffered. Remigius, archbishop of Lyons, distinguished himself on this occasion, and a council was held at Valence, in Dauphiny, in the year 855, where both Gotteschalculus and his doctrine were vindicated and defended. Two subsequent councils confirmed the decrees of this council. The churches of Lyons, Vienne, and Arles, formerly renowned for piety, vigorously supported his sentiments ; and it was apparent that all relish for the doctrines of grace was not lost in the church.”

In the tenth century, both religious and secular knowledge touched the lowest point of depression. Baronius, the partial annalist of the Roman church, confesses that “ this was an iron age, barren of all goodness ; a leaden age, abounding in all wickedness ; and a dark age, remarkable above all others fi



the scarcity of writers and men of learning." The vices and crimes of the popes of this century were most notorious ; and but for the blinded ignorance of the age, were of themselves sufficient to have destroyed the delusion of the sacred character of the see of Rome. The language of Arnulph, bishop of Orleans, in a council held at Rheims, of which he was president, is remarkable. " O deplorable Rome, who in the days of our forefathers producedst so many burning and shining lights, thou hast brought forth, in our times, only dismal darkness, worthy of the detestation of posterity ! What shall we do, or what counsel shall we take ? The Gospel tells of a barren fig-tree, and of the Divine patience exercised towards it. Let us bear with our primates as long as we can ; and in the meantime seek for spiritual food where it is to be found. Certainly there are some in this holy assembly, who can testify, that in Belgium and Germany, both which are near us, there may be found real pastors and eminent men in religion. Far better would it be, if the animosities of kings did not prevent that we should seek, in those parts, for the judgment of bishops, than in that venal city, which weighs all decrees by the quantity of money."— " What think you, reverend fathers, of this man the pope, placed on a lofty throne, shining in purple and gold ?—Whom do you account him ? If destitute of love, and puffed up with the pride of knowledge only, he is Antichrist sitting in the temple of God."

But barren as this century was of writers, it wanted not altogether those who maintained the doctrine of Augustin, as Giselbert, and particularly the monk Radulph.—" Since all," he writes, " are by nature children of wrath, and born under the yoke of diabolical slavery, there is no ground to expect that any persons, except those whom celestial clemency delivers, should of themselves choose to come out of the general mass of depravity ; for it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy."

In the eleventh century, learning revived a little among the clergy and monks<sup>1</sup>. This learning consisted chiefly in grammar, rhetoric, and logic ; but the sacred writings were not altogether neglected. In this century, the famous Berengarius of Tours wrote against the doctrine of the corporeal presence. There are no existing evidences of his real piety ; but some of the old historians charge him with corrupting almost all the French,

<sup>1</sup> Mosheim.



Italians, and English, with his depravities. Laborious missionaries still laboured among the pagans in the North of Europe. That on some occasions, in this and the preceding centuries, the stream rose higher than its fountain-head, and the messengers of Rome cleared themselves from her abominations, it is easier for charity to hope and believe, than to rejoice in the truth of it; but Christianity, even in its most adulterated form, was, at least, a temporal blessing, to the rude nations of the North. "Look," says Adam of Bremen<sup>1</sup>, "at the very ferocious nation of the Danes—for a long time they have been accustomed, in the praise of God, to resound Alleluia! Look at that piratical people. They are now content with the fruits of their own country! Look at that horrid region, formerly altogether inaccessible on account of idolatry; they now eagerly admit the preachers of the word<sup>2</sup>!" The evangelising of the North was certainly one cause of its rude inhabitants ceasing to disturb the nations of the South, which tended much to the improvement of society. English missionaries had had a great share in this important work, in the preceding centuries.

Alphage, archbishop of Canterbury, had exerted himself to convert the Danes who had settled in England, and he certainly met his death at the hands of their countrymen, in the spirit of a Christian martyr<sup>3</sup>. Nor could the spiritual culture of the poor of England have been altogether neglected, as Mr. Milner argues, when one of his predecessors in the see of Canterbury, Elfric, had, in a council in which he presided, published a canon<sup>4</sup>, that every parish-priest should on Sundays and other holidays explain the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Gospel for the day, before the people, in the English tongue.

The bishops introduced into the English sees after the Norman Conquest, are clearly marked in history, as having been far superior in intelligence and personal character to the Saxon prelates whom they succeeded; but they riveted faster the chains of slavery to Rome<sup>5</sup>. Lanfranc, whom the Conqueror

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 1080.

<sup>2</sup> Gibbon, vol. v. c. 55. note.

<sup>3</sup> A.D. 1013.

<sup>4</sup> A.D. 1006.

<sup>5</sup> Mr. Turner has ventured an opinion, "that if the Norman Conquest had not occurred, religion would have expired in England, or have sunk to that combination of ceremonies and sensuality, which the Paganism of antiquity had displayed in its declining state." "Noblemen were hearing divine service in their bedchambers instead of the churches, and practising their vices while their

appointed to the see of Canterbury, confirmed the doctrines of transubstantiation, and his successor Anselm was not less devoted to the pope. In his contest with the crown, he has met with an able defender in Mr. Lingard; and Protestants as well as Papists sometimes have need to be on their guard against prejudice. Mr. Milner observes, and has proved the truth of his observation by extracts from the writings of the archbishop, that “amidst the gloom of superstition with which he was surrounded, he was yet enabled to describe and vindicate every fundamental of evangelical doctrine. Though a papist, he appeals to Scripture; he expounds them by opening the plain, grammatical sense of St. Paul.” “Remove the rubbish of superstition and view the inward man, and you see in Anselm all that is vital and essential in godliness.”

How his eyes could yet be blinded to the real character of the papacy, must be left to him who has opened ours; but, as a bishop and pastor, he certainly taught his people something better than popery. “A direction for the visitation of the sick was composed by Anselm; the substance of which is as follows. Two previous questions were to be asked by the minister; the first was, Dost thou believe that thou deservest damnation? The second, Dost thou intend to lead a new life?” “He was then to be asked, Dost thou believe that thou canst not be saved, but by the death of Christ?” “The minister proceeds to address him, ‘See then, while life remains in thee, that thou repose thy confidence only in the death of Christ; trust in nothing else; commit thyself wholly to his death; cover thyself wholly with this alone; mix thyself wholly with his death; involve thyself wholly in his death. And if the Lord will judge thee, say, Lord, I cast the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between myself and thy judgment; otherwise I will not engage in judgment with thee. And if he shall say to thee that thou art a sinner, say, I place the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between me and my sins. And if he shall say to thee thou deservest damnation, say, Lord, I cast the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between me and my evil deserts, and I offer his merits for that merit which I ought to have had and had not: if he shall say that he is angry with thee, say, Lord, I cast the

careless clergy were looking on, and verbally praying in a language which they neither understood nor could pronounce; and general habits of dissoluteness and inebriety pervaded the country.”—*History of England*, vol. ii. p. 360.

death of the Lord Jesus Christ between me and thy displeasure." All pronounced this prelate exemplarily holy, according to the "straitest sect" of their religion; but hear his own meditation. "I have asked many good things, my Creator, though I have deserved many evils. Not only I have no claim on thee for these good things, but I have merited exquisite punishments. But the case of publicans, harlots, and robbers, in a moment snatched from the jaws of the enemy, and received in the bosom of the Shepherd, animates my soul with a cheering hope."

In the beginning of the twelfth century, we find a bishop of Florence teaching publicly that Antichrist was born and come into the world. This gave great offence, and Pope Pascal II. held a council at Florence<sup>1</sup>, reprimanded the bishop, and enjoined him silence on that subject.

But the life and writings of Bernard, called the Last of the Fathers, redeems the Roman community in this age from the character of entire desolation. We have no reason to suppose that Bernard was alone in his generation; there were probably many more, like him, taught of God in secret, to whom, notwithstanding, it was not given to know the nature of the abomination which held them in subjection. And this exposes to view what the word of prophecy had described, that in the temple where the man of sin did sit, and shew himself as God, there was a measured space, untrodden by the feet of the Gentiles<sup>2</sup>, which contained the altar, and them that worshipped therein. Bernard was admired in his age as a perfect model of all that a Roman catholic and a monk should be; he gained such an influence over his contemporaries, that princes and pontiffs consulted him as an oracle. His character was formed for the times in which he lived; not to stem the torrent of corruption, but to go with it, and diffuse a small portion of healing in its waters, which, there can be no doubt, caused many, who else would have drunk of them to their destruction, to live. Many parts of his works may still be read with profit by members of the purest churches; for, as Mr. Milner observes, "there was not an essential doctrine of the Gospel, which he did not embrace with zeal, defend by argument, and adorn by life." That he saw not 'the deceivableness of iniquity,' when he advocated the cause of superstition and the errors of popery, is certainly a deplorable inconsistency; but surely we are defective

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 1105.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. xi.

in charity, if in Bernard we attribute it to his "not receiving the love of the truth," to his "having pleasure in unrighteousness." Yet, as few think it worth their time to acquaint themselves with his writings, we shall give the opinions formed of this father. "Papists represent him as an angel, and Protestants as a narrow bigot or furious zealot. Those who know nothing more of him than what they have learned from the prejudice of opposite extremes, are tempted to think him an object worthy of contempt, if not of detestation;" but those who will take the pains to study the character of Bernard from his own works, will contemplate a dispensation of the manifold grace of God, and learn how he could quicken and nourish the soul of a bigoted Papist of the twelfth century, with manifestations of saving mercy, with which few in the most enlightened ages have been favoured. Nor can any other cause be assigned that he, who is celebrated for the founding of a hundred and sixty monasteries, might not have been the founder of as many Protestant churches, than that, in the wonderful mystery of Divine Providence, the time was not yet come, when God would deliver his people out of captivity.

One great benefit to the church arose from his public ministry. In his contest with the notorious Abelard, he "nipped Socinianism in the bud<sup>1</sup>," which might else have torn up the very foundations of the church, already fallen in ruins. His preaching up of the Crusades for the recovery of the Holy Land, we must refer to the mistaken zeal of the times; and if among the Cathari there was indeed a people of saints of the Most High, to whose death he was consenting, we know that the blood of Him, whom he in ignorance persecuted, could wash out this stain also. It is evident that he regarded these sectaries, whose history we are afterwards to consider, not as maintaining the truth, which he knew and had tasted, against the peculiarities of the reigning superstition; but as heretics, holding fundamental errors concerning the person and atonement of Christ; and it is most probable, from the weight of historic evidence, that such was the fact. How a real Christian could approve of the laws of the age, which subjected deluded heretics, even of the worst description, to penalties so severe, the intelligent reader will not ask; for he must know that it was comparatively but very lately that either Papists or Protest-

<sup>1</sup> Milner.

ants could be made to perceive that God required not the punishment of error at their hands; and that it was as impolitic as it was unjust and unmerciful.

Bernard died about the age of sixty-three<sup>1</sup>, chastened under the hand of God by a most severe illness. Certainly, if we believe his own words, he did not trust to superstitious vanities. "As far as in him lies," he writes, "he who attributes the glory of redemption, not to the cross of Christ, but to our proficiency in holy conversation, renders void and of none effect the mystery of the Divine dispensation; but God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom is our salvation, life, and resurrection." — "I consider three things in which my hope consists; the love of adoption, the truth of the promise, and the power of performance. Let my foolish heart murmur as much as it pleaseth, and say, Who art thou, and how great is that glory, or by what merits dost thou expect to obtain it? I will confidently answer, I know whom I have believed, and I am certain, that he hath adopted me in love; that he is true to his promise; that he is powerful to fulfil it; for he can do what he pleaseth. This is the three-fold cord which is not easily broken, which being let down to us from our heavenly country to earth, I pray that we may firmly hold, and may He himself lift us up, and draw us completely to the glory of God, who is blessed for ever." "Happy is he alone, to whom the Lord imputeth not sin. To have Him propitious to me, against whom alone I have sinned, suffices for my righteousness. Not to impute my sins, is, as it were, to blot out their existence. If my iniquity is great, thy grace is much greater. When my soul is troubled at the view of her sinfulness, I look at thy mercy and am refreshed<sup>2</sup>."

The reputation of Bernard, and his great connexions, permitted him to inveigh with impunity against the luxury and the sensuality of the clergy, of which he was a faithful reprovcr. But it fared ill with another eminent ecclesiastic in this age, for pursuing the same course; Meginher, archbishop of Treves, who, on account of the resentment which by this means he provoked, died in prison<sup>3</sup>. Arnulph, a presbyter, fell a martyr at Rome, for the same faithful testimony. Henricus, bishop of Mentz, may be added to the number of faithful witnesses against the world, that its deeds were evil. By the unjust accusation of his clergy, he was deprived of his bishopric by two cardinals at

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 1153.<sup>2</sup> Milner.<sup>3</sup> A.D. 1130.

**Worms.** “ I know,” said he, “ if I were to appeal to the pope, it would be in vain. I appeal, therefore, to Jesus Christ, the just Judge of quick and dead, who neither accepts persons, nor receives bribes, as you do.”

Anselm, bishop of Havelburg, who flourished in the middle of this century, “ saw and censured the pharisaism of the monkish institutions. He declared that there were many in his time, successively rising up<sup>1</sup>, who disapproved of the vanity and novelty of monastic orders.”

This clearly marks the period of the appearance of witnesses for the truth, who were better instructed concerning the whole mystery of iniquity, and enabled to discern the true character of the reigning church ; and so far to cast off that superstitious veneration for a name which had enslaved their predecessors, that they venture to renounce her communion, or to deliver such a testimony against her abominations, that she expels them from her synagogue, and severs them from her stock, as branches to be burnt.

From about this epocha to nearly the middle of the twelfth century, we find very few indeed absolutely devoted to the papacy, like Anselm and Bernard, who give decisive evidence that they were in secret led by the Spirit of God. In fact, the papacy was now becoming more shameless in her abominations ; and in the pride of her sway, manifested, too clearly to be misunderstood, the nature of her origin, and her real antichristian character. The thirteenth century, as Mr. Hallam has told us, was the “ noon-day of papal dominion,” and her noon was the midnight of true religion. “ It seemed, indeed, as if the faithful were minished from among the children of men, and not one godly man was left.” Mr. Milner has observed of the Roman community, that it produced, during this century, no single person who could have given a satisfactory answer to the question, “ What must I do to be saved ?” But as we shall see in the following chapter, if God was about to cut off Babylon without a seed or remnant, and leave her name for a curse to his chosen, he had still “ a people” in reserve, though “ called by another name,” whom he would raise up to produce faithful witnesses to his truth.

The prevalence of the Aristotelian philosophy, as we have seen, in treating of the rise of the ecclesiastical power, distinguished the papal schools about this period, and supplied new

<sup>1</sup> Cent. Magd., cent. xii. 761. — MILNER.



instruments for her subtle wisdom, "to take the wise in their own craftiness;" at the same time, the begging and preaching friars were admirable instruments "to crouch and lie down, and draw the poor into the net." But with the philosophy of the schools, a worse poison was now introduced, and scattered far and wide by the new missionaries, which reduced to a still lower ebb the little life that was left in the body of the Roman church. The doctrines of grace, as maintained by Augustin in the fifth century, had all along been a medicine of health to some; and little real religion can be found in the Roman churches, but in connexion with the teaching of these doctrines, which, though but little felt and regarded, were till about this time, still, esteemed among many of the Roman Catholics, as of authority, and as orthodox.

But now the Pelagian doctrines were the fashionable divinity. "Grace of congruity," Dr. Mosheim observes, "was in high repute; in other words, justification by men's own works was insisted on; and while some decent show of respect was shewn in *words* to the merits of Christ, the real meritorious objects on which men were taught to place their hope, were some performances by which they might, in a lower sense, *deserve* grace, and purchase the application of it to themselves. Thus, a religion prevailed, which accommodated all sorts of sinners. Those of a more decent cast were taught to expect the Divine favour by their own works, which deserved grace of congruity; and the most scandalous transgressors, by the doctrine of commutation of offences, might still obtain forgiveness; the exercise of munificence towards the hierarchy was sure to cover all crimes; the humble and contrite alone, who felt what sin is, and sighed for a remedy, found no relief to consciences which could not admit the delusive refreshments provided by the papacy."

But the God of all grace will never excite a spiritual thirst for the waters of life, which he will not quench; if the priest's lips no longer retain knowledge, they are supplied from another source. A few names, indeed, there are, and but a few, that from this era are to be found among the Catholics of Rome, claiming to be recorded in this part of our history. There appears one monarch of excellent character far above his contemporaries, Louis IX. of France, of whom good may be hoped<sup>1</sup>; and one sovereign pontiff, Celestine V., who, because he found

<sup>1</sup> Died A.D. 1270.



it impossible to reform, abdicated the papacy, and through the jealousy of his successor, died in prison<sup>1</sup>.

Grosseteste, bishop of Lincoln, may be mentioned, who certainly retained some knowledge of the truth ; and after combating with an intrepid spirit, during his life, against the grosser abuses of the papacy, seemed, when near his death, almost to have discovered its true character. In allusion to the pope, he says : “ Christ came into the world to save souls ; ought not he, then, who takes pains to ruin souls, to be denominated Antichrist ? ” “ Many popes have afflicted the church ; this Innocent has enslaved it more than they all.” “ The church can never be delivered from this Egyptian bondage, but by the edge of the sword.” And while he was scarcely able to speak for sighs and tears, his breath failed him<sup>2</sup>.

But more especially may be mentioned Bradwardine, archbishop of Canterbury, in the fourteenth century<sup>3</sup>, who, not many weeks after his consecration, was taken away from the evils which he deplored. He had been the confessor of Edward III., and was in high esteem with the king, whom he accompanied in his French wars. “ He often preached before the army,” and “ made it his business to calm and mitigate the fierceness of his master’s temper, when he saw him either immoderately fired with warlike rage, or improperly flushed with the advantages of victory. He also often addressed the army ; and with so much meekness and persuasive discretion, as to restrain them from those insolent excesses which are too frequently the attendants of military success<sup>4</sup>.” His great work was, “ The Cause of God against Pelagius ; ” “ an admirable performance,” says Mr. Milner, “ whether one considers the force of his genius, the solidity of his reasoning powers, or the energy of his devotion. In reviewing it, it gave me great satisfaction to observe that the Spirit of God had not forsaken the church ; but, on the contrary, in one of the darkest periods had raised up a defender of Divine truth, who might have done honour to the brightest. Abstracted from the spirit of the times in which he lived, Bradwardine gave himself up to the investigation of real Gospel truth.”

The following extract throws some light on the state of religion in the age in which he lived. “ As I was somewhat encouraged by the countenance of those who love the cause of God, so I own I am discouraged by the opposition of those who

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 1296.    <sup>2</sup> A.D. 1253.    <sup>3</sup> A.D. 1349.    <sup>4</sup> Sir Henry Savile, in Milner.

embrace the cause of Pelagius, who are, alas ! far more numerous. For behold, I speak it with real grief of heart, as formerly eight hundred and fifty prophets, with the addition of numbers of the populace without end, were united against one prophet of the Lord, so, at this day, how many, O Lord, contend for free-will against thy gratuitous grace, and against St. Paul, the spiritual champion of grace ! How many, indeed, in our times, despise thy saving grace ; and maintain that free-will suffices for salvation ! or if they use the term grace, how do they boast that they deserve it by the strength of free-will ; so that grace in their eyes appears to be sold at a price, and not freely conferred from above ! How many, presuming on the power of their own free-will, refuse thy influence in their operations, saying, with the ungodly, Depart from us ! How many, extolling the liberty of their own will, refuse thy service ; or if with their lips they own that thou co-operatest with them, how do they, like the proud disobedient angels of old, who hated thee, refuse that thou shouldest reign over them ! Nay, prouder than Satan, and not content to esteem themselves thy equals, they most arrogantly boast that they reign above thee, the King of kings ! For they fear not to maintain that their own will in common actions goes before as mistress, that thine follows as a handmaid ; that they go before as lords, that thou followest as a servant ; that they as kings command, and that thou as a subject obeyest ! How many support Pelagianism with clamour, raillery, and derision ! Almost the whole world is gone after Pelagius into error. Arise, O Lord, judge thine own cause," &c.

He largely refutes the error, more famous than any other in his day, that men by their works deserve grace of congruity. " By this it is," says he, " that men rush headlong into Pelagianism : not content with gratuitous grace, men would have grace to be sold by God, though at a very cheap rate."

" Why do we fear to preach the doctrine of the predestination of saints and of the genuine grace of God ? Is there any cause to dread lest man should be induced to despair of his condition, when his hope is demonstrated to be founded on God alone ? Is there not much stronger reason for him to despair, if, in pride and unbelief, he founds his hope of salvation on himself ?"

Bradwardine was indeed a light shining in a dark place ; and we behold, through the light afforded for a moment, the imagery of papal darkness, which it was not given to him to enlighten. But though his lamp was so soon extinguished, it pleased God

to light it again in a more humble station, and by his own power to make it more permanent in England, by the ministry of Wickliff, as we shall see in the following chapter.

But down to the Reformation itself, there wanted not some in the Roman communion, who, unconnected with the Reformers, knew and published the truth. Thomas Rhedon, a Frenchman, and Carmelite friar, was burnt at Rome<sup>1</sup>, for his zealous preaching against her abominations. Savanarola, an Italian monk, with two friars, Dominic and Silvester, were accused, in explicit terms, of having preached the doctrine “ of free justification through faith in Christ.” Persevering in what was called an obstinate heresy, they were degraded, and delivered to the secular power at Florence, and burnt to death<sup>2</sup>.

Thomas à Kempis, Vincent Ferrer, John de Wesalia, who was condemned to perpetual penance, especially John Wesselus, of Groningen, are recorded in Mr. Milner’s larger history. The last, who died in 1489, he says, has been justly called the forerunner of Luther. That great reformer was so astonished when he first met with some pieces of the composition of Wesselus, that in the Leipsic edition of 1522, he wrote a preface to the work, in which he says, “ By the wonderful providence of God, I have been compelled to become a public man, and to fight battles with these monsters of indulgences and papal decrees. All along I supposed myself to stand alone ;” — “ but, behold ! I am told that, even in these days, there is a secret remnant of the people of God. Nay, I am not only told so, but I rejoice to see a proof of it ; here is a new publication of Wesselus of Groningen, a man of an admirable genius, and of an uncommonly enlarged mind. It is very plain that he was taught of God, as Isaiah prophesied that Christians should be ; and as in my own case, so with him, it cannot be supposed that he received his doctrines from men. If I had read his works before, my enemies might have supposed that I had learned every thing from Wesselus ; such a perfect coincidence there is in our opinions. As to myself, I not only derive pleasure, but strength and courage from this publication. It is now impossible for me to doubt whether I am right in the points which I have inculcated, when I see so entire an agreement in sentiment, and almost the same words used by this eminent person, who lived in a different age, in a distant country, and in circumstances very unlike my own. I am surprised that this excellent Christian writer should be so

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 1436.

<sup>2</sup> A.D. 1499.

little known. The reason may be, either that he lived without blood and contention (for this is the only thing in which he differs from me); or perhaps the Jews of our times have suppressed his writings as heretical."

## SECT. II.

THE REFORMERS FROM POPERY WHO APPEARED PREVIOUSLY TO THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.—THE WALDENSES—THE WICKLIFFITES—THE HUSSITES.

After tracing the evidences which history affords of the existence of a remnant according to the election of grace, during this long period of a thousand years, in the midst of the apostate church itself, our attention is next demanded for those individuals or classes of men, whom the catholics of Rome called heretics; but who may appear to us, perhaps, to have worshipped the God of their fathers, uncontaminated with the abominable idolatries of Rome, and to have borne a more clear and decided testimony against the mystery of iniquity, now triumphant in the visible church.

If we admit that many, far more than history knows any thing about, were the objects of Divine pity and compassion,—and, in the midst of Catholic conformity, were rebuked and purified by the chastening hand of God,—they, as individuals, were saved as brands plucked from the burning, suffering the loss of all their labours; for the effect of their labours—as many as were completely subservient to Rome—was but to erect wood, and hay, and stubble, upon the foundation which, by the miracle of Divine grace, they held. As public characters, they cannot, in general, be reckoned on the side of the Gospel; nay, some of them, in their ignorance, aided in the erecting of that abomination which made the church desolate. For the faithful witnesses of the truth, who bore a public testimony profitable to its cause, and rescued souls from the captivity of these damnable delusions, we are compelled to look to those despised and persecuted classes of men, whose names were cast out as evil, and whom the world could not love, because their spirit was stirred up within them, to testify of it that its deeds were evil.

In pursuing our researches among these sectaries, a very great difficulty occurs, which every one who is at all acquainted with the subject, will be ready to acknowledge and appreciate. We have no account of the opinions and sentiments of these people,

in the earlier part of this period, but from their bigoted and persecuting enemies. Is it therefore at all probable, that we should know the truth concerning them ?

There always existed, we know, in opposition to the Catholic church, from the time of the apostles, a variety of sects and heretics, some of whom had “brought in damnable doctrines, even denying the Lord that bought them.” Of these the principal were the Gnostic sects, and, in more recent times, the Arians. These sects had never become altogether extinct. But, in comparison of these, the Catholic church, in the lowest period of her desolation, was to be considered as Christ’s kingdom assailed by his adversaries. She was still the holy city, although “given to the Gentiles to be trodden under foot.” She still possessed in the midst of her, the “measured temple,” and “the altar,” and “them that worshipped therein ;” though the existence of one catholic and apostolic church might well be reckoned among things unseen, of which faith was the evidence, and be numbered with the articles of the Creed. But with respect to those sects that denied “Jesus Christ, come in the flesh,” and overthrew the doctrine of the atonement, they are pointed out by the finger of God, in his holy Word, as altogether reprobate and antichristian, “as denying the Son” — and “denying the Father also.”

If, however, the multitude of the professed orthodox, who, having the form of godliness, but denying its power, and becoming enslaved to superstitious vanities, and defiled by idolatries, should have to encounter sects of a purer faith, whom it might please God to raise up to bear witness against his apostate church, — it would naturally happen that all these would be numbered, by blinded zeal and bigotry, among those who held the older heresies, and would be exposed to every imputation which might attach to them, in order to discredit their testimony against the prevailing abominations. The history of every age of the church, down to our own times, illustrates this. It was the grief and lamentation of some of the primitive Christians, when they were persecuted by the heathen, that they suffered in company with the followers of the Gnostic sects ; that they were confounded with them, and had, through the indiscriminate malice of their enemies, to bear all the reproach of their wickedness and extravagance. And there is abundant reason to believe, that the first witnesses against the abominations of apostate Christendom, who fell for their faithfulness, suffered martyrdom without receiving its honours, “being numbered with the

evil doers." This appears to have been the case, especially in the earlier part of their history, among the numerous classes of persons who suffered persecution in the East, under the appellation of Paulicians; and of others in the West, under various names, of which those of Albigeois, or Albigenses, and the Cathari, have been rendered most famous.

The only original accounts indeed <sup>1</sup>, which remain of the former, describe them as a Gnostic sect, residing principally in Armenia, and afterwards spreading in Bulgaria; that they maintained the existence of two deities, the one evil, the creator of this world, the other good, called the Heavenly Father, the author of that world which is to come; that they rejected the Old Testament, as inspired by the evil deity, and believed, with the ancient Gnostics, that our Saviour was clothed on earth with an impassive celestial body, and denied the reality of his death and resurrection. Though they had their teachers, they did not admit any distinct order of priesthood or ministry. Such is the account we are compelled to acquiesce in, on the credit of all surviving testimony <sup>2</sup>. Suspicions have indeed been entertained, that the bigoted authors of this testimony might have included in this judgment of holding Gnostic errors respecting the person and death of Christ, all who refused to adore the Virgin, or the wood and sign of the cross; and might have charged with denying the sacraments and ministry of the Word, those who only refused to submit to the rites and rulers of the Greek and the Latin churches.

But there are more substantial grounds to suppose, that if these authors did find the remains of the Paulicians corrupted by the Gnostic heresy, in the ninth century, to which period their testimony refers, they were, in their origin, of a far different stamp; and we must be sensible that very essential changes may take place in the opinions of sects during the space of a hundred and fifty, or two hundred years.

The Paulicians are said to have originated in the year 660, from the gift of a New Testament in the original language, by a deacon of the Greek church, to a person of the name of Constantine. They are admitted to have been very studious of the Scriptures, at a time when their perusal was not permitted to the laity of the Greek church <sup>3</sup>. They were particularly attached to

<sup>1</sup> Photius and Petrus Siculus.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Hallam.

<sup>3</sup> "A Paulician woman asked a young man if he had read the Gospels: he replied, that laymen were not permitted to do so, but only the clergy," &c. — See HALLAM *on the Middle Ages*, vol. ii. p. 528, *note*.



the writings of St. Paul, and hence most probably their name; for, as though they were proud to acknowledge themselves the disciples of St. Paul, Constantine called himself Silvanus, and others of his companions bore the names of Titus, Timothy, and Tychicus, and the names of the apostolic churches were given to the congregations formed by their labours in Armenia and Cappadocia. This reverence for the memory and writings of the Apostle to the Gentiles, seems a sufficient pledge that they were not originally contaminated with the Gnostic errors. How long they retained their purity, and supplied witnesses for the truth against the corruptions of the church, we have no documents to shew. The dispute between them and the Greeks "was at its height under the reigns of Constans, Constantius, Justinian II., and Leo the Isaurian. The Greeks were not only armed with arguments, but were also seconded by the force of military legions and the terror of penal laws<sup>1</sup>." After a short intermission, under the emperor Nicephorus, the persecution burst forth with redoubled fury, under Michael, and Leo the Armenian.

But if they had formerly suffered as Christians and faithful witnesses for the truth, the spirit which makes the martyr had now forsaken them: "suffering wrongfully," they "took it not patiently." They avenged themselves upon their persecutors, returning cruelty for cruelty. After massacring the bishop of Nova Cesarea, and the magistrates and judges which the emperors had established in Armenia, they took refuge in the countries governed by the Saracens, and from thence infested their native country with perpetual incursions. They appear afterwards to have returned to their habitations in the Grecian provinces. But they endured a still more grievous persecution under the empress Theodora. The manner in which it was executed was horrible beyond expression. After confiscating the goods of above a hundred thousand of that miserable people, their enemies put them to death in the most barbarous manner, making them expire slowly under the most exquisite tortures. Those that escaped fled to the Saracens, who received them with kindness, perhaps from political motives; and by their assistance, they again commenced a war of vengeance, and during the whole of the ninth century maintained a fierce, and often a successful conflict with the Greeks, attended with prodigious slaughter on both sides, and which entailed incalculable miseries on the Greek provinces.

<sup>1</sup> Mosheim.



It was after this period, that the authors, on whose account we must rely for our knowledge of the religious opinions of the Paulicians, became acquainted with this people, now a successful military band; and we are not at all surprised that their doctrines, at this period, should be any thing but Scriptural. For the want of the patience and meekness of the Christian martyrs, in those who are called to suffer wrongfully for conscience' sake, as plainly marks the decay of spiritual religion in a persecuted sect, as worldly ambition and spiritual tyranny mark the progress of the same corruption in churches exalted by the opinion of mankind. But in the history of the Paulicians, we see an awful retribution of Divine justice; and, at the same time, an admonition to the persecutor, that the harmless and inoffensive people whom he is persecuting for the truth's sake, may, in the next generation, by such treatment, become, in his hands, or in the hands of his successors, of a very different character, and grow up into a political or military faction, a meet scourge of vengeance to his children, and a cause of ruin to his country.

From this period, therefore, we must not reckon the Paulicians among the witnesses for the Truth; and this is of the more importance, because it seems to be probable, from the records of history, that most of the sects who infected Europe before the twelfth century, and who appear in the character of dissenters from the Roman catholic church, were derived from these Paulicians, and were more or less contaminated with their Manichean or Gnostic heresy. From their settlement in Bulgaria, "they silently propagated their Manichean creed over the Western regions of Christendom. A large part of the commerce of those countries with Constantinople, was carried on, for several centuries, by the channel of the Danube. This opened an immediate intercourse with the Paulicians, who may be traced up that river, through Hungary and Bavaria, or sometimes taking the route of Lombardy, into Switzerland and France. In the last country, and especially in its Southern and Eastern provinces, they became conspicuous under a variety of names; such as Catharists, Picards, Paterins, but above all, Albigenses. It is beyond doubt, that many of these sectaries owed their origin to the Paulicians; the appellation of Bulgarians was distinctively bestowed upon them." "The tenets ascribed to them by all contemporary authorities, coincide so remarkably with those held by the Paulicians, and in earlier times by the Manicheans, that I do not see how we can reasonably deny what is confirmed by separate and uncontradicted

testimonies, and contains no intrinsic want of probability." Mr. Hallam, from whom I quote this passage, seems to have investigated this obscure part of history with great care and impartiality.

Both the Cathari and the Albigenses, are clearly traced by him to a Paulician origin. Concerning the latter he observes : " Some denied the reality of Christ's body ; others, his being the Son of God ; many, the resurrection of the body ; some, even a future state. They asserted, in general, the Mosaic Law to have proceeded from the devil, proving this by the crimes committed during its dispensation, and by the words of St. Paul : ' The law entered that sin might abound.' They rejected infant baptism, but were divided as to the reason ; some saying that infants could not sin, and did not need baptism ; others, that they could not be saved without faith, and consequently, that it was useless. They held sin after baptism to be irremissible. It does not appear that they rejected either of the sacraments. They laid great stress upon the imposition of hands, which seems to have been their distinctive rite." The leading principle of the Gnostics and Manicheans, was also found among them : the " belief of two principles, or creative beings ; a good one, for things invisible ; an evil one, for things visible." " The peculiar tenets of Manicheism died away after the middle of the thirteenth century, although a spirit of dissent from the established creed broke out in abundant instances during the two subsequent ages."

It appears that the zeal of Protestant writers has led them into many errors respecting these early dissentients from the church of Rome. Perceiving that for a long period they were the victims of her bloody persecuting spirit, they have been more positive than the truth of history warrants, in concluding that they were martyrs for the Gospel of Christ. We have reason however to suspect, that there might at least be some of this character among them, whom their enemies would not fail to confound with the heterodox sects, as we indeed know there afterwards were. Mr. Hallam himself remarks : " Though the derivation of these heretics, called Albigenses, from Bulgaria, is sufficiently proved, it is by no means to be concluded that all who incurred the same imputation, either derived their faith from the same country, or had adopted the Manichean theory of the Paulicians. From the very invectives of their enemies, and the

<sup>1</sup> History of the Middle Ages, vol. ii. p. 526, &c.

acts of the inquisition, it is manifest that almost every shade of heterodoxy was found among these dissidents, till it vanished in a simple protestation against the wealth and tyranny of the clergy."

We remark also, that as some protestant writers have been too forward to admit the orthodoxy of these sects in general, because they shared, with the early reformers, the persecution and hatred of the Romish church; so, some writers of that faith, and more recently, some highly vaunted philosophical adversaries of the truths of the Gospel, have been as industrious to fix the stigma of a Gnostic origin on the principles of the Reformation, as well as on the principles of the faithful witnesses who immediately succeeded that glorious era. This false insinuation appears in the very luminous view which the historian Gibbon has taken of the opponents of perverted Christianity. "The visible assemblies of the Paulicians, or Albigeois, were extirpated by fire and sword, and the bleeding remnant escaped by flight, concealment, or catholic conformity. But the invincible spirit which they had kindled, still lived and breathed in the Western world. In the state, in the church, and even in the cloister, a latent succession was preserved of the disciples of St. Paul, who protested against the tyranny of Rome, embraced the Bible as the rule of faith, and purified their creed from all the visions of the Gnostic theology. The struggles of Wickliff, in England, of Huss, in Bohemia, were premature and ineffectual; but the names of Zuinglius, Luther, and Calvin, are pronounced with gratitude, as the deliverers of nations<sup>1</sup>." The truth, however, respecting these great reformers, will, on examination, be found to be, that none of them sprung, or imbibed their opinions from the Gnostic sects; but that they arose in the body of the catholic church itself, and learned their principles from the ancient fathers, and the Scriptures, and had 'no visions of the Gnostic theology,' from which they 'purified their creed.' But, on the contrary, there is every reason to believe that the great bane of the Reformation, and that against which these reformers combated with as much zeal as against popery itself, had indeed its origin from the remnants of these Gnostic sects, who, at the period of the Reformation, were exceedingly multiplied under the names of Anabaptists, &c. and in various ways proved a greater injury to the truth, than had proved all the violence even of Rome itself.

<sup>1</sup> History of the Decline and Fall, chap. lix.

But before we arrive at the era of the blessed Reformation, we have a long succession of witnesses for the truth ; and though many of them suffered among the heterodox in the faith, they are cleared, even by their persecutors themselves, from any participation in their errors in this respect. To these belong the Waldenses, the Lollards, or followers of Wickliff, and the Hussites, none of whom were of Gnostic or Manichean origin, or learned their opposition to Rome from these sects, though it is not improbable that they might rescue some of them from their heresies, as well as some of the catholics from their vain superstitions.

The origin of the Waldenses is involved in some obscurity. These people are perpetually confounded, both by the Romanists and by protestant writers, with the Albigenses, and other sects more early known as opponents of the Roman church ; but they ought carefully to be distinguished from them<sup>1</sup>. “ Those ” of the dissidents from Rome, Mr. Hallam observes, “ who were absolutely free from any taint of Manicheism, are properly called Waldenses ; a name perpetually confounded in later times with that of Albigenses, but distinguishing a sect probably of separate origin, and at least of different tenets. These, according to the majority of writers, took their appellation from Peter Waldo, a merchant of Lyons, the parent, about the year 1160, of a congregation of seceders from the church, who spread very rapidly over France and Germany. According to others, the original Waldenses were a race of uncorrupted shepherds, who, in the valleys of the Alps, had shaken off, or perhaps had never learned, the system of superstition on which the catholic church depended for its ascendancy. I am not certain whether their existence can be traced beyond the preaching of Waldo ; but it is well known that the proper seat of the Waldenses, or Vaudois, has long continued to be in certain valleys of Piedmont. These pious and innocent sectaries, of whom the very monkish historians speak well, appear to have nearly resembled the modern Moravians. They had ministers of their own appointment, and denied the lawfulness of oaths, and of capital punishment. In other respects their opinions probably were not far removed from those usually called Protestant. A simplicity of dress, and especially the use of wooden sandals, was affected by this people.” Such is the summary account which Mr. Hallam has given of the Waldenses, evidently compiled with great care, and

<sup>1</sup> See Hallam's History of the Middle Ages, vol. ii. p. 531.

with references in his notes to a great number of original authorities.

Peter Waldo, who was either the founder or the reviver of the churches of the Waldenses, was an opulent merchant of the city of Lyons, in France. He was first drawn forth as a witness for the truth against the reigning abominations of the church, by the recent establishment of the doctrine of transubstantiation, and the idolatrous worship ingrafted upon it. Men were now required to fall down before the consecrated host, and worship it as God. This was about the year 1160. Against the introduction of this "strange God," the spirit of Waldo was first stirred up within him, and his views were soon enlarged with more extensive schemes of reformation. The impressions made on his mind by the sudden death of a friend, in his presence, cast his lot for life. He abandoned his employment, divided his goods among the poor, and took upon himself the character of a preacher of reformation in the midst of the apostate church.

Though the reading of the Scriptures was not as yet prohibited to the laity<sup>1</sup>, or viewed by the Romish clergy with such jealousy as it was afterwards<sup>2</sup>, yet the sacred writings were fallen much into disuse, the acts of the saints having been deemed more instructive, and translations of them from the Latin, which had long ceased to be understood by the common people, were in all probability become extremely scarce. It was one of the first labours of Waldo, to make, or cause to be made, a translation of the Scriptures into the vernacular tongue. This translation he explained to the people, and distributed it among them. "His kindness to the poor being diffused, his love of teaching and their love of learning growing stronger and stronger, greater crowds came to him, and he explained the Scriptures. To satisfy his disciples by the testimony of the doctrine against his adversaries, he is said to have made a collection, in the vulgar tongue, of the passages of the ancient fathers<sup>3</sup>. These proceedings soon attracted the attention of the archbishop of Lyons, and Waldo was threatened with excommunication, and the penalties denounced against heresy. Satisfied however with his call to this extraordinary ministry, and impressed with the necessity of the case, he refused to be silent; and so much was he favoured by the people and the circumstances of the times, that the city of Lyons afforded him concealment, or shelter, for

<sup>1</sup> They were prohibited by the Council of Toulouse, A.D. 1229.

<sup>2</sup> See Hallam, vol. ii. p. 635.

<sup>3</sup> Milner, vol. iii. p. 441.

the space of three years. Meanwhile, the Pope heard of his proceedings, anathematised him and his adherents, and commanded the archbishop to proceed with the utmost rigour. Waldo could no longer remain in Lyons; he escaped from the hands of his persecutors, was followed by his disciples, and a general dispersion took place. Thus, by the providence of God, this tender plant of reformation was afforded protection, just long enough for it to grow up and mature its seeds, which were then scattered abroad and took root in many different parts of Europe.

Waldo retired into Dauphiny, where his preaching was attended with great and lasting success. Being persecuted in this country, he fled into Picardy, and exercised the same fruitful ministry there. By means of his followers, he also laid the foundations of the reformed churches of the valleys of Piedmont, and revived those which had already been formed by the labours of Claudius of Turin, in the ninth century, or which had never been corrupted by the abominations of Rome, but were a preserved remnant of a purer church in more ancient times. From this period, the term Waldenses became the proper appellation for those dissidents from the church of Rome, who held the true faith once delivered to saints. From the circumstance of their origin in this city, they were sometimes called "Poor men of Lyons." Though they were often confounded by their persecutors, with the ancient heretics the Albigenses, Arians, and Manicheans, yet the most intelligent critics make a clear distinction, and describe the Waldenses, who were often involved in the same condemnation, as most sharply disputing against these heretics. The principal charge against them was, disregarding the authority of the church, and preaching without a regular mission. "It is evident, however," Mr. Hallam observes, "from the acts of the Inquisition, that they denied the existence of purgatory; and I should suppose that even at this time they had thrown off most of the popish system of doctrine, which is so closely connected with clerical wealth and power. The difference made in these records between the Waldenses and the Manichean sects, shews that the imputations cast upon the latter were not indiscriminate calumnies."

Waldo himself had been driven from France into Germany, and finally settled in Bohemia, where he died in the year 1179, after a ministry of nearly twenty years, exercised in that country.

<sup>1</sup> See Notes in Hallam, vol. ii. p. 634.



Persecution was every where the lot of his followers, but they still continued to increase in many parts of Europe. Philip Augustus, of France, "took up arms against the Waldenses of Picardy, pulled down the houses of three hundred gentlemen who supported their party, destroyed some walled towns, and drove the inhabitants into Flanders. Not content with having done this, he pursued them thither, and caused many of them to be burnt." "Thirty-five citizens of Mentz were burnt in one fire, in the city of Bingen, and at Mentz eighteen." The same number were burnt at Strasburg. "Every thing relating to the Waldenses resembles the scenes of the primitive church. Numbers died praising God, and in confident assurance of a blessed resurrection; whence the blood of the martyrs again became the seed of the church; and in Bulgaria, Croatia, Dalmatia, and Hungary, churches were planted, which flourished in the thirteenth century, governed by Bartholomew, a native of Carcassone, a city not far distant from Toulouse, which in those days might be called the metropolis of the Waldenses, on account of the numbers who there professed evangelical truth. In Bohemia and in the country of Passau, it has been computed that there were eighty thousand in the former part of the fourteenth century. Almost throughout Europe, Waldenses were found; and yet they were treated as the offscouring of the earth, and as a people against whom all the power and wisdom of the world was united<sup>1</sup>." "The persecution which raged against the Waldenses, or as they are sometimes called, the Albigenses, in the former part of the thirteenth century, was an assemblage of every thing cruel, perfidious, indecent, and detestable." The subjects of Raymond, count of Toulouse, and others in their neighbourhood, so generally professed the Waldensian doctrines, that they became the peculiar objects of papal vengeance. Reinerius, a persecutor, acknowledges that the Waldenses were the most formidable enemies of the church of Rome, "because they have a great appearance of piety; because they live righteously before men,—believe rightly of God in all things,—and hold all the articles of the creed; yet they hate and revile the church of Rome; and in their accusations they are easily believed by the people."

In the beginning of the thirteenth century, the cruel institution of the Inquisition took place under Innocent III. The

<sup>1</sup> Milner, vol. iii. p. 45.



Waldenses were the first objects of its cruelties. Thousands were tormented and put to death. The havoc made by the Inquisition, from the year of its establishment 1206, to the year 1228, had been so extensive, that "certain French bishops complained of the number of its victims being so great, that it was impossible to defray the charge of their subsistence, or even to supply stone and mortar to build prisons for them."

A crusade against Count Raymond and his subjects, was soon solemnly proclaimed by the pope, as had been customary against the Saracens. It promised remission of sins and paradise to the holy pilgrims who should bear arms for forty days against the heretics. At this call, three hundred thousand pilgrims assembled, and filled the country with carnage and confusion for many years, and great numbers of the people suffered martyrdom. Their country fell finally under the sceptre of France.

In all their different retreats, and in the valleys on both sides of the Alps, the Waldenses were hunted out, and pursued with military violence, during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; and, on many occasions, during the fifteenth, and even the sixteenth centuries. The persecuted wanted not, at this time, a divine poet to sing their wrongs.

Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones  
Lie scatter'd on the Alpine mountains cold;  
Ev'n them who kept thy truth so pure of old,  
When all our fathers worshipp'd stocks and stones.  
Forget not: in thy books record their groans  
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold  
Slain by the bloody Piedmontese, that roll'd  
Mothers with infants down the rocks. Their moans,  
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they  
To heaven! Their martyr'd blood and ashes sow  
O'er all the Italian fields, where still does sway  
The triple tyrant; that from these may grow  
A hundred fold, who, having learn'd thy way,  
May early fly the Babylonian woe.

The earliest account of this people of God, who thus "fell by the sword and by flame, by captivity and by spoil for many days," is taken from an ancient poem called the 'Noble Lesson'. "If any one," it is said "love those who love God

<sup>1</sup> From the date of this Poem, many have argued for the existence of the people afterwards called Waldenses, before the time of Waldo. But it merely says, "eleven hundred years are now gone past, since then it was said, these

and Jesus Christ ; if he will neither curse nor swear, nor act deceitfully, nor live in lewdness and injustice, nor avenge himself of his enemies, they presently say, The man is a Vaudes ; he deserves to be punished ; and iniquitous methods are then used to rob him of the fruits of his industry. Such a one, however, consoles himself with the hope of eternal salvation." " Their first principle," it is said, is " to honour God the Father, to implore the grace of his glorious Son, and the Holy Ghost, who enlightens us in the way of truth. This is the Trinity, full of all power, wisdom, and goodness, to whom we ought to pray for strength to overcome the devil, the world, and the flesh, that we may preserve body and soul in love. To the love of God, the love of our neighbour ought to be joined, which comprehends the love even to our enemies." The same character is disclosed at a later period. " When Lewis XII., importuned by the calumnies of informers, sent two respectable persons into Provence, to make inquiries, they reported, that on visiting their parishes and temples, they found no images or Roman ceremonies ; but that they could not discover any marks of the crimes with which they were charged ; that the sabbath was strictly observed ; that children were baptised according to the rules of the primitive church, and instructed in the articles of the Christian faith, and the commandments of God. Lewis having heard the report, declared, with an oath, " They are better than myself and my people." Thuanus, an enemy, describing them in a valley of Dauphiny, says, " Their clothing is of skins of sheep ; they have no linen ; they inhabit seven villages. Their houses are constructed of flint stones, with a flat roof covered with mud, which being spoiled or loosened by rains, they smooth again with a roller. In these they live with their cattle, separated from them, however, by a fence. They have two caves set apart for particular purposes, in one of which they conceal their cattle, in the other themselves, when hunted by their enemies. They live on milk, and venison, being by constant practice good marksmen. Poor as they are, they are content, and live separate from the rest of mankind. One thing is astonishing, that persons externally so savage and rude should have so much moral cultivation. They can all read

times are the last." But this might be loosely said of any period in the twelfth century, and the reference is probably to the Epistle of St. John, which was written very late in the first century ; and eleven hundred years would exactly reach the period of the first effects of Waldo's preaching.

and write ; they understand French so far as is needful for reading the Bible and for singing the Psalms. You can scarce find a boy among them who cannot give you an intelligible account of the faith which they profess ; in this, indeed, they resemble their brethren of the other valleys. They pay tribute with a good conscience, and the obligation of this duty is particularly noted in the Confession of their faith ; if, by reason of the civil war, they are prevented from doing this, they carefully set apart the sum, and, at the first opportunity, pay it to the king's tax-gatherers<sup>1</sup>."

Such, even from the mouths of their enemies, is the character of a people who dwell in certain districts, from the borders of Spain throughout the south of France, for the most part among and below the Alps, along the Rhine, on both sides of its course, and in Bohemia. The churches of Piedmont, however, on account of their superior antiquity, were regarded as guides of the rest ; so much so, indeed, that they frequently received from thence their pastors, whom they called Barbs.

In a book concerning their pastors, we have the following account of their vocation. " All who are to be ordained as pastors among us, while they are yet at home, entreat us to receive them into the ministry, and desire that we would pray to God that they may be rendered capable of so great a charge. They are to learn by heart all the chapters of St. Matthew and St. John, all the canonical epistles, and a good part of the writings of Solomon, David, and the prophets : afterwards, having exhibited proper testimonials of their learning and conversation, they are admitted as pastors by the imposition of hands. The junior pastors must do nothing without the license of their seniors ; nor are the seniors to undertake any thing without the approbation of their colleagues, that every thing may be done among us in order. We pastors meet together once every year to settle our affairs, in a general synod. Those whom we teach afford us food and raiment, with good will and without compulsion. The money given us by the people, is carried to the said general synod ; is there received by the elders, and applied partly to the supply of travellers, and partly to the relief of the indigent. If a pastor among us fall into any gross sin, he is ejected from the community, and debarred from the function of preaching." Such is the manner of choosing the Barbs, and such was the plan of church-government.

<sup>1</sup> Vignaux, in Milner.

The Waldenses maintained the grand position of the Protestant faith almost in the words of our Sixth Article : “ That we ought to believe that the Holy Scriptures alone contain all things necessary to our salvation ; and that nothing ought to be received as an article of faith but what God has revealed to us.” They affirm that “ there is only one Mediator, and therefore that we must not invoke the saints,” — “ that there is no purgatory ; but that all those who are justified by Christ go into life eternal.” “ They receive two sacraments, baptism and the Lord’s supper.” “ All masses, they affirm, are damnable.” “ They deny the supremacy of the pope,” “ and admit no other degrees except bishops, priests, and deacons.” “ They condemn the popedom as the true Babylon ; allow the marriage of the clergy, and define the true church to be those who hear and understand the Word of God.” They unquestionably received the Athanasian Creed ; and in regard to the Pelagian leaven, they were free. “ God created Adam after his own image ; but through malice of the devil, and the disobedience of Adam, sin entered into the world, and we became sinners in and by Adam. Christ is our life, and truth, and peace, and righteousness ; our Shepherd and Advocate, our Sacrifice and Priest, who died for the salvation of all who should believe, and also rose again for our justification.”

The Confession of the Bohemian Waldenses, published in the former part of the sixteenth century, is very explicit on these articles. They say, “ that men ought to acknowledge themselves born in sin, and to be burdened with the weight of sin ; that they ought to acknowledge that, for this depravity, and for the sins springing up from this root of bitterness, utter perdition deservedly hangs over their heads ; and that all should own that they can no way justify themselves by any works or endeavours, nor have any thing to trust to but Christ alone. They hold that by faith in Christ, men are, through mercy, freely justified, and attain salvation by Christ, without human help or merit. They hold that all confidence is to be fixed in him alone, and all our care to be cast upon him ; and that for his sake only God is pacified, and adopts us to be his children. They teach also, that no man can have this faith by his own power, will, or pleasure ; that it is the gift of God, who, where it pleaseth him, worketh in man by his Spirit.” “ They assert that all who have been and shall be saved, have been elected of God before the foundation of the world ; and that

whosoever upholds free-will, absolutely denies predestination and the grace of God<sup>1</sup>."

All this is so like the language of the first reformers, that one might be tempted to suppose that the Waldenses had re-lighted their lamp from the fire which came down from heaven in the days of Luther and Calvin. But Mr. Milner observes, "It is remarkable that an ancient Confession of Faith, copied out of certain manuscripts, bearing date 1120, that is, forty years before Peter Waldo, contains the same articles in substance, and, in many particulars, in the same words, as those of which an abridgment has been given, and which was approved in the sixteenth century. The conclusion from this fact is, that though Waldo was a most considerable benefactor to the Waldensian churches by his translation of the Scriptures, his other writings, his preaching, and his sufferings, he was not properly their founder. Their plan of doctrine and church-government, particularly in Piedmont, was of prior date; nor can any other account of the existence and light of a church so pure and sound, in ages so remarkably corrupt, be given, than this, that the labours of Claudius, archbishop of Turin, in the ninth century, had, under the blessing of God, produced these effects<sup>2</sup>."

We have pursued this history of Waldo and his followers, from the time of his ministry to the era of the Reformation; or rather, perhaps, of a people who had long subsisted distinct from the Roman community, and who, about the time of Waldo, animated by the same Spirit that had stirred up the mind of the merchant of Lyons, began to assume a more conspicuous station in the view of general history, and spreading far and wide their religious principles, accidentally received the name of one of their more successful teachers. But whatever injury the faithful testimony of the Waldenses had done to the church of Rome, she boasted that she had subdued them; or at least had reduced them so low, by the persecutors she had let loose upon them, that their opposition to her dominion was now contemptible, and beyond their obscure valleys scarcely attracted the notice of mankind<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Morland, in Milner.

<sup>2</sup> The date of this MS. on which Mr. Milner grounds his remark, has been shewn to be probably erroneous. His general inference, however, may still not be destitute of truth. — See Mr. WILLIAM JONES'S *Account of the Waldenses*.

<sup>3</sup> Father Paul.

II. But, in the mean time, a blow from another quarter had been aimed, with still better effect, at her greatness ; and from which she had not well recovered, when her severer conflict, and the struggle for half her dominions, at the era of the Reformation, caused her to forget her ill-cured wounds and her smaller griefs. The record of this brings us back to our own country, and to the grateful recollection of John Wickliff, who, whatever obscurity involves his story, and whatever errors may have dimmed his lustre, has, not without reason, been denominated the “ morning star of the Reformation.” He did not indeed, like Waldo, separate himself from the communion of the Romish church ; but she who could best discern who were her own, pronounced her judgment, “ that he did not belong to her,” when she ordered the disinterment of his remains, and scattered his ashes on the streams, which carried them down to those shores from which the everlasting Gospel is borne on the waves to every tongue, and nation, and language ;—sure prognostic of the final fall of the mystic Babylon !

It has not been ascertained what direct influence the preaching of the Waldenses had produced upon the people of England ; but there can be no doubt, from the intercourse between our island and the Continent, and from the known zeal of the preachers, that England must have received some light from this source, which would of course foster the principles which Wickliff disseminated ; and it is not improbable that Wickliff stood in the same relation to the Lollards, the name by which the reformers were called in England, as Waldo did to the sect to whom he left his name.

But it does not appear that Wickliff derived his opinions from this source. One of his biographers expressly says, “ God gave Dr. Wickliff grace to see the truth of his Gospel ; and by seeing it, to loathe all superstition and popery. By Abelard and others, he was grounded in the right faith of the sacrament of the Lord’s supper ; by Bradwardine, in the nature of true soul-justifying faith, against merit-mongers and pardoners, Pelagians and papists. Finally, by reading Grosseteste’s works, in whom he seemed to be most conversant, he described the pope to be Antichrist<sup>1</sup>. ”

It were, indeed, improbable to suppose, that the bold and successful animadversions of Bishop Grosseteste on the abuses

<sup>1</sup> Dr. James.—See Milner. “ Wickliff made great use of Bishop Greathead’s hostilities against the pope : in his Postils he told the people, ‘ Seith ~~Re~~ Oreste that this [pope’s] bulles ben heresies ; for thei ben false. ~~heresies~~ : trarie to Holy Writ.’ ”—See TURNER’S *Hist. of Eng.* vol. i. p. 396. note.



of the popedom, or the sound doctrines levelled at its foundations, by Bradwardine, who, from being a popular preacher in the victorious armies of Edward III., had been raised to the see of Canterbury—made no impression on the public mind, hostile as it was become, from other causes, to the tyranny of the popes, and scandalised, as it was, at the corruptions of the clergy, their envied wealth, and the constant disputes between the regulars and the seculars, mutually exposing and criminating each other. Historians, indeed, make it apparent, that a spirit of ecclesiastical reform, and even of infidelity, was every where abroad in this age. But we are in search of a revolution of opinion of a peculiar kind, where “the knowledge of the truth maketh free indeed;” and the industry of Mr. Turner has disclosed, that the seeds of this knowledge were springing up in the university of Oxford, sown by very extraordinary hands, more than seventy years before the appearance of Wickliff, and about forty-five years after the death of Bradwardine.

“It is a curious instance of the inefficacy of selfish, worldly policy to make its own contrivances successful in perpetuating the servitude of mankind, that the great revolution of religious doctrines which ended in the Reformation, sprang up in England from the new order of friars which had been established to prevent it.” In 1284, the Dominicans, or preaching friars, were denounced by the archbishop of Canterbury, as propagating dangerous errors at Oxford. In the next year, he renewed his complaints against both them and the minors or Franciscans. He accused the captains of the Dominicans as reviving heresies, censured their falsehood and malice, and charged them with calumniating his reputation. He told the Franciscans, that they ought to reverence the priests of God, and that they who despise the episcopal dignity, disturb the peace of the church. He exclaimed against the arrogance of some who, “more elate than capable, more bold than powerful, more garrulous than literary, presumed to dogmatise with ignorance, and to delude the seducible young.” He compared them to the locusts in the Revelation. He dated their novel opinions as about twenty years old, and complained that the authority of the holy fathers was despised and thrown aside. In the next year, he entered the field of controversy again; he recapitulated the heresies which he reprobated, and which were aimed at transubstantiation; he excommunicated all who maintained *them*, and remarked with asperity, that they who do maintain *in* give no credence to the authority of the pope, or of



St. Gregory, or St. Austin, or any orthodox masters, *but ONLY to the authority of the Bible and necessary reason.*

Twelve months afterwards, he requested the bishop of Lincoln to visit Oxford, to inquire into certain articles of "science falsely so called," which were pursued in the studies at Oxford; "as if the first beams of religious improvement began to dawn from that university<sup>1</sup>." The main body, however, of the mendicant orders, it appears, were still considered as the chief support of the Roman superstition; and the same archbishop, soon afterwards, gave the Franciscans his support against the secular clergy and ancient orders.

It was at the university of Oxford, in the year 1360, that Wickliff first became known to the world. He then appeared as the bold and successful champion of the university, against some late encroachments of the friars, which had much injured and reduced the university. This was the foundation of the public fame of the reformer, and the immediate cause of his promotion. In the following year, he was appointed to the headship of Baliol College, and four years afterwards, was chosen warden of Canterbury College. From this office he was ejected by Langham, the archbishop, a patron of the friars<sup>2</sup>. Wickliff appealed to the pope, who artfully suspended his decision for three years, when he confirmed the sentence of the archbishop. But in this dispute, he had the university entirely with him; he was promoted to the chair of the divinity professors, and read lectures publicly with great applause. He was considered by every one as the defender of the cause of truth and liberty against the pope and his clergy, who were universally hated, even where the superstition that upheld them was still beloved.

The particular circumstances of the times much aided the reformer. The pope had claimed a tribute from the king, and the clergy, in general, espoused his cause. Wickliff, however, distinguished himself by a masterly answer to the unjust demand; so that, as in his first dispute with the papal party he had the university on his side, now he had the king and parliament and the general voice of the nation with him. This is supposed to be the occasion of his becoming known at court, and in particular to the duke of Lancaster, who was long his powerful protector against the clergy. He was fixed upon as one of the king's ambassadors to the pope, to carry before him

<sup>1</sup> Turner's Hist. Eng. vol. ii. p. 411.

<sup>2</sup> A.D. 1367.

the complaints of the nation against the grievances which it endured<sup>1</sup>. On his return, he appears to have resumed his station at Oxford, and was presented to the living of Lutterworth, in Leicestershire, by the king. About this time<sup>2</sup> he made his great attack on the papal system, in a work which he published, entitled, "Trialogus;" and it is very evident that, notwithstanding the powerful supporters and friends he had found in the measures which he had hitherto taken, he had counted the cost of being deserted in the cause he was now to plead, or at least of raising an hostility which neither he nor his friends could long oppose.

"Wickliff wrote this book," says Mr. Turner, "with a strong impression of his personal danger. He states that those whom he opposed were machinating his death, and he strenuously enforces the duty of suffering martyrdom for the sake of truth, and earnestly contends, that it was as necessary in his time as in ancient days." He adds emphatically, "Instead of visiting pagans to convert them by martyrdom, let us preach constantly the law of Christ, even to princely prelates;" "martyrdom will then occur to us rapidly enough, if we persevere in faith and patience<sup>3</sup>." The attractive merit "of this performance," Mr. Turner observes, "was that it combined the new opinions with the scholastic style of thinking and deduction. It was not the mere illiterate reformer teaching novelties, whom the man of education disdained and derided; it was the respected academician reasoning with the ideas of the reformer." If some part of Wickliff's conduct in the hour of trial, has been considered as not sufficiently firm, this refutes the calumny of his enemies, that political motives alone urged him to his opposition to the corruptions of Rome.

This bold attack was not likely to pass unnoticed. The pope accordingly issued an order to the English bishops, for his apprehension and imprisonment<sup>4</sup>, and Wickliff appeared before the archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of London, in St. Paul's. The contest was diverted from the reformer, and became a conflict between the duke of Lancaster, on whose protection he had thrown himself, and the executors of the papal decrees. Wickliff escaped by this means, and felt himself strong enough to disregard the injunction of silence which the bishops had pronounced upon him. In the following year, he

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 1374.

<sup>2</sup> Certainly between A.D. 1372 and 1377.—TURNER.

<sup>3</sup> See the original passage, Turner's Hist. Eng. vol. i. p. 424.

<sup>4</sup> A.D. 1377.

was again summoned before the same prelates ; but the presence of a multitude favourable to his cause, and a peremptory order from the court, arrested their hands, and the death of the pope soon after terminated the commission against him. Wickliff had, indeed, qualified some parts of his former testimony, in a manner which has been deemed not consistent with the general character of the reformer. But after this, when he was enjoined silence by his patron, the duke of Lancaster, he refused to obey<sup>1</sup>, was chased from his station at Oxford by the new archbishop, Courtney, and died in his retirement at Lutterworth<sup>2</sup>."

But the most important measure which Wickliff had adopted, to open the eyes of his countrymen respecting the abominations of the Romish religion, was the translation of the Scriptures into English. The advocates of the papacy felt this to be a severe blow ; the clergy clamoured against this measure almost universally, and it may be instructive as well as entertaining to the reader to see, in a short quotation from a learned canon of Leicester, a contemporary of Wickliff, what was thought to be good reasoning by the ecclesiastics of those days<sup>3</sup>. " Christ committed the Gospel to the clergy and doctors of the church, that they might minister it to the laity and weaker persons, according to the exigency of times and persons' wants ; but this master John Wickliff translated it out of Latin into English ; and by that means laid it more open to the laity, and to women who could read, than it used to be to the most learned of the clergy, and those of them who had the best understanding ; and so the Gospel pearl was cast abroad and trodden under swine ; and that which used to be precious both to the clergy and laity, is made, as it were, the common jest of both ; and the jewel of the church is turned into the sport of the laity."

Dr. Lingard, a Roman Catholic, ascribes the same importance to Wickliff's translation of the Scriptures. " Wickliff made a new translation, multiplied the copies with the aid of transcribers, and by his ' poor priests' recommended it to the perusal of their hearers. In their hands it became an engine of wonderful power. Men were flattered by the appeal to their private judgment ; the new doctrines insensibly acquired partisans and protectors in the higher classes, who alone were acquainted with the use of letters ; a spirit of inquiry was

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 1382.<sup>2</sup> A.D. 1384.<sup>3</sup> Milner, Appendix.

generated, and the seeds were sown of that religious revolution which, in a little more than a century, astonished and convulsed the nations of Europe."

Mr. Turner informs us, from the contemporary authorities, that "preachers imbued with the opinions of Wickliff started up in many places; and several knights, lords, and even dukes, espoused them. The citizens of London became, for the most part, Lollards, as the new reformers were called. The sermons of the mendicant friars, formerly so admired, were undervalued, and the preaching from the NEW SCRIPTURES made a universal impression." After his death his disciples were indefatigable. Three years afterwards we find a bishop of Worcester complaining, that "the eternally-damned sons of Antichrist, the disciples and followers of Mahomet, conspiring with a diabolical instigation, confederating together under the name of Lollards, and actuated by insanity, were pouring out their poison from their honeyed mouth, under the veil of great sanctity." From which we may infer, that these reformers were men of virtuous lives and mild manners, as well as of intelligent minds.

Many of the reformers of the day, who saw clearly the abuses of the church and Roman clergy, had a dreadful apprehension of the Bible and Lollardy. The poet Gower, no doubt, expresses a common sentiment on this matter; yet he was, notwithstanding, a warm advocate for ecclesiastical reform, and a severe exposé of the vices of the clergy.

"This newe secte of Lollardie,  
And also many an heresie,  
Among the clerkes in themselves.  
It were better dike and delve,  
And stande upon the right feith,  
Than know all that the Bible seith."

GOWER'S *Prol.* p. 10.

"Beware that thou be not oppressed  
With Antichriste's Lollardie."

*Conf.* lib. v. p. 137.

A contemporary poet, however, had learned more truly to apply the term Antichrist. Chaucer, speaking of the luxurious clergy, who called themselves Christ's ministers, says—

"But Antichrist they serven clene,  
Attired all in tyrannie:

Witness of John's prophetic  
That Antichrist is their admiral."

*Plowm. Tale.*

All the severity of persecution that the church could use, death excepted, was employed; but it was never favoured by Richard II. more than the power of the clergy was able to compel. In 1394, the inferences made by the reformers were presented to Parliament. The clergy continued their inquisitions and attacks, but the new opinions spread both to high and low; even the earl of Salisbury, one of Richard's last favourites, zealously protected them. A contemporary, not their friend, declares, that the sect so multiplied at this period, that "you could scarcely meet two persons in the street, but one was a Wickliffite." "If Richard II.," continues Mr. Turner, "had been a wiser sovereign, he might have conducted the improving spirit of his subjects to a happy issue; the ecclesiastical system would have been timely reformed, as Wickliff recommended; and the storms that agitated the country for another century, might have been prevented or allayed. But, favouring the reformer, and at the same time offending his people, he gave the church the power of contributing largely to his dethronement. The new dynasty, which they mainly assisted to raise, joining with them to maintain all the abuses of the papal system, could not stand against the vindictive operation of the persecuted. The kingdom became convulsed in the struggle; but the house of York was enabled to depose the house of Lancaster—principally from the unpopularity to which the maintenance of the ecclesiastical corruptions and intolerance had subjected it."

"But the important agencies of Wickliff's mind were not confined to his own country; they not only enlightened England, but they electrified Bohemia. The marriage of Richard II. with a Bohemian princess, connected the two countries by a friendly intercourse. The queen's court was attended by several Bohemian knights and noblemen; she favoured the principles of our reformer; and one of her countrymen, who had studied at Oxford, taking with him the writings of Wickliff as a precious treasure, lent them to several persons, and, among others, to John Huss, who was then residing at the newly established university of Prague."

But before we turn our attention to the reformers of Bohemia, let us pursue the history of Wickliff's disciples in England.

Under the usurpation of the house of Lancaster, the crown gave its power to the leaders of the papal superstition, to assist in upholding their dominion over a discontented people, and their instructors in the doctrines of Wickliff were persecuted with fire and sword. William Sawtre, a clergyman of London, who openly taught these doctrines, was the first person who was committed to the flames, for it was hoped that by the dread of this terrible punishment the growing spirit of inquiry would be intimidated. He suffered in the year of our Lord 1400, the year which followed the accession of Henry IV. John Badby also, an illiterate mechanic, withstood all the arguments of the papal hierarchy, though enforced with the threat of the fiery ordeal. In his death he encountered the future hero of the age, who sought a far meaner glory than himself; the prince of Wales, afterwards Henry V., having been present at his execution, and trying the firmness of the martyr both by threats and entreaties. His cry of "Mercy," when he felt the flame, was understood to be addressed to his earthly judges, and the prince ordered the fire to be quenched; not to exercise mercy, but again to urge the contest. "Will you forsake your heresy? Will you conform to the faith of the holy church? If you will, you shall have a yearly stipend from the king's treasury." But Badby accepted not deliverance; and Henry, enraged, left him to suffer the death he preferred rather than to deny his Saviour<sup>1</sup>.

The powers of the church and state were now most actively employed to crush the "Gospellers," as the followers of Wickliff were also called. Many were compelled, through fear, to recant the faith they believed; but others besides Sawtre and Badby were found faithful unto death. In the year 1413, Henry succeeded his father; and, in like manner, permitted his authority to be "exercised" by the Roman church "before him." The archbishop, Arundel, in the first year of his reign, called a synod of all the bishops and clergy of England, to meet at St. Paul's Church, in London, in order to devise plans for the suppression of the growing sect. Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham, a nobleman not only respected by the people, but known to be in great favour with the king, was denounced as their great supporter. He had not only distinguished himself in opposing the papal superstition, but had, it appears, expended large sums in transcribing the works of Wickliff, in order to circulate them among the lower orders. It was also well known

<sup>1</sup> Rom.

that he maintained a great number of itinerant preachers in many parts of the country, particularly in the dioceses of Canterbury, Rochester, London, and Hereford. To subdue or to destroy this great “ringleader of the Gospellers,” became of course the grand object of ecclesiastical policy. But the archbishop proceeded with caution. The university of Oxford was suspected, not without cause, of being tainted with the new doctrines. Wickliff’s memory was cherished there; and the results of Arundel’s commission of inquiry, which he procured by the royal mandate to be sent to Oxford, discovered that the university was overrun with heretics, and that Lord Cobham employed scholars from that place to circulate his opinions.

When this report was laid before the convocation, it was resolved to prosecute that nobleman without delay as a heretic; but more prudent counsels suggested that the young king should first be sounded, and the archbishop knew how to instil into the mind of his sovereign a shocking impression of his errors. Henry undertook himself to reclaim him, by his arguments and persuasions, to his obedience to the holy church. The answer of Lord Cobham to the king, in his conference with him, has well deserved to be recorded. “You I am always most ready to obey, because you are the appointed minister of God, and bear the sword for the punishment of evil doers; but as to the pope and his spiritual dominion, I owe them no obedience, nor will I pay them any; for as sure as God’s word is true, to me it is fully evident that the pope of Rome is the great Antichrist foretold in holy writ; the son of perdition, the open adversary of God, and the abomination standing in the holy place.” The king, as though the idol of his superstition had been insulted, turned away from him in displeasure, and gave him up to the will of his adversaries. After several citations to appear, the archbishop excommunicated him, and demanded the aid of the civil power to apprehend him, and he was at length arrested by the express order of the king, and committed to the Tower.

Cobham, in the military spirit of the age, would fain have stood upon his defence, in single combat, by the wager of battle, which the law indeed allowed in certain cases; but which it appears a little surprising that this Christian hero should not have known to be contrary to a leading principle of the religion of Christ. We have a very minute account, in Fox’s *Acts and Monuments*, of Cobham’s examination before the bishops, where the intrepidity of his character, as well as his keen discernment, appears very striking. The doctrine of transubstantiation, as



was usual at this time, was the great touchstone to convict the heretic.

The Scripture has indeed used very strong and decided language respecting this mystical memorial of the sacrifice of Christ, but the Romanists, we have seen, were not content with this; the consecrated wafer was, in their hands, "a strange god" which they had made, and held up for the worship of the people. Lord Cobham had admitted, "that in the sacrament, there is both Christ's body and the bread: the bread is the thing we see with our eyes; but the body of Christ is hid and only to be seen by faith." Upon this, with one voice, they cried, heresy! heresy! One of the bishops in particular said with emotion, "It is a foul heresy to call it bread." Cobham answered smartly, "St. Paul the apostle was as wise a man as you, and perhaps as good a Christian, and yet he calls it *bread*<sup>1</sup>." "To be short with you, I believe the Scriptures most cordially, but I have no belief in your lordly laws and idle determinations; ye are no part of Christ's holy church, as your deeds do plainly shew." An old opponent of Wickliff present, exclaimed: "What rash and desperate people are these followers of Wickliff!" "Before God and man," was the remarkable answer of Lord Cobham, "I solemnly here profess, that till I knew Wickliff, whose judgment you so highly disdain, I never abstained from sin; but after that I became acquainted with that virtuous man and his despised doctrines, it has been otherwise with me; so much grace could I never find in all your pompous instructions." "It were hard," was the reply, "that in an age of so many learned instructors, you should have no grace to amend your life, till you heard the devil preach." "Your fathers," said Cobham, "the old pharisees, ascribed Christ's miracles to Beelzebub, and his doctrines to the devil," &c. The long examination was at length brought to an end by the archbishop's interference. "The day," said he, "passes away fast; we must come to a conclusion;" "you must either submit to the ordinances of the church, or abide the dangerous consequences." Lord Cobham replied, "My faith is fixed; do with me what you please." Without further delay the archbishop judged and pronounced Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham, to be an incorrigible, pernicious, and detestable heretic; and having condemned him as such, he delivered him to the secular jurisdiction. With a most cheerful countenance he re-

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. x. 6.

plied to his sentence, " Though ye condemn my body, which is but a wretched thing, yet I am well assured ye can do no harm to my soul, any more than could Satan to the soul of Job. He that created it, will of his infinite mercy save it. Of this I have no manner of doubt. And in regard to the articles of my belief, I will, by the grace of the eternal God, stand to them, even to my very death." He then turned to the people, and stretching out his hands, cried with a very loud voice, " Good Christian people, for God's love, be well aware of these men : else, they will beguile, and lead you blindfold into hell with themselves." Having said these words, he fell down upon his knees, and, lifting up his hands and eyes to heaven, he prayed, " Lord God Eternal ! I beseech thee of thy great mercy to forgive my persecutors, if it be thy blessed will."

But though they had bound their victim, from some cause or other they durst not then strike, whether it was that the king had relented, or that they dreaded the popular odium of the death of a man of Cobham's rank and character. The archbishop is made to go himself to the king, and request him to postpone the execution of Lord Cobham for fifty days ; and in the interval, by what means is unknown, he escaped from his prison. The king's mind, however, was poisoned with artful reports of the seditious meetings of the Lollards, of which Lord Cobham was the reputed head<sup>1</sup> ; and after a concealment of four years he was seized, and with circumstances of great cruelty burnt alive<sup>2</sup>.

Arundel, complimented by the papists with the title of " the tower of the English church," was succeeded by Chichely, a persecutor still more artful and violent than the former archbishop ; and while Henry, it is said at his instigation, was desolating the kingdom of France, Chichely at home, by exile and flame, and forced abjurations, seemed to have completely triumphed over the disciples of Wickliff, properly so called. But the conduct of

<sup>1</sup> See Fox's Acts and Monuments, and Mr. Milner. " That the king was acted upon by some secret agents, Mr. Turner says, is clear ; that the plots asserted were really formed, there is no evidence. The probability is, that Henry's generous and lofty mind was found to start at the violences which the bigotry of the papal clergy had resolved upon ; and that artful measures were taken to alarm it into anger and cruelty, by charges of treason, rebellion, and meditated assassination." This effect took place ; Oldcastle was taken and burnt ; a vindictive statute was passed against the Lollards, and the persecution was sternly maintained. Mr. Turner speaks of Arundel as dying the same year, after the death of Lord Cobham ; but by the authorities Mr. Milner has followed, he died three years before, and had already been succeeded by Chichely.

<sup>2</sup> A.D. 1417.

the papal clergy, in these transactions, had exposed them to the just hatred and indignation of the people of England. "The splendid victory of Agincourt, the acquisition of the crown of France, and the shortness of his reign," Mr. Turner observes, "preserved Henry from any ill consequences from abetting such a system;" "but they appeared in a destructive shape after the succession of his son. The verbal avowal of the new opinions was repressed, but their secret diffusion was multiplied; and the reforming mind gazed eagerly about, to see how it could be revenged on the clergy, without incurring the penalties of law. It struck boldly at their wealth, the real source of their power. An address from the commons to the king, to seize the revenue of the ecclesiastical body, compelled them to soothe him by giving up one hundred and ten alien priories. The conflict only assumed a more portentous shape from the determined violence of the church. That violence made the absolute downfall of one party or of the other, sooner or later, inevitable; and the kingdom continued to be convulsed till this event occurred."

These reflections of this able historian illustrate the situation in which Henry VIII. found the kingdom, and which gives him an appearance, according to the common histories, of being able to alter and change the religion of a great and thinking nation, by his mere caprice and arbitrary pleasure. The truth was, the parties which, from whatever motive, were for upholding the papal power, or for destroying the same — whether for the love of true religion, or of civil liberty, or of plunder and sacrilege — were nearly equally poised in the kingdom, and the slightest leaning of the immense power of the crown under the Tudors, made either party preponderate; and Henry might have assumed the motto, with respect to his ecclesiastical administration, which he assumed in his interference in the contest on the Continent, between Charles V. and Francis I., "He prevails whom I favour."

But until the very period of these great political movements, it appears that "Lollards or Gospellers" were still occasionally, by the influence of the papal clergy, brought to punishment and death, simply for their religious opinions. During the minority of Henry VI., William Taylor, a priest, was burnt for maintaining that prayer was to be addressed to God alone. Among a number of others, William White, as a reward for his labours in the cause of truth in Norfolk, was brought to the stake, in 1424. The wars between the houses of York and Lancaster, which deluged the kingdom with blood, and extinguished a very large

portion of the families of the ancient nobility, might well seem a judgment of Divine vengeance for the blood of his slaughtered saints ; but it did not put an end to these cruel persecutions. A person named John Gooze, was burnt on Tower Hill<sup>1</sup>, in the reign of Edward IV. The sufferings of the Lollards were even greater under the government of Henry VII. and the first part of Henry VIII., than during the civil wars. Neither age nor sex was spared ; all who were convicted of denying popish superstitions, or even of reading the Scriptures, unless they abjured and submitted, were first condemned as obstinate heretics, and then delivered over to the secular arm, and burnt to ashes, without mercy and without exception<sup>2</sup>.

The names of archbishop Warham, Fisher, bishop of Rochester, and Langland, bishop of Lincoln, the king's confessor, are branded, as having been most cruel persecutors of the Lollards in the sixteenth century. The year 1521 was a dreadful season in the diocese of Lincoln.

Mr. Milner, towards the close of his account of the Lollards, has given their character from a popish writer<sup>3</sup>, which speaks more powerfully in their favour than any panegyric of friends could possibly do. "The disciples of Wickliff are men of a serious modest deportment, avoiding all ostentation in dress, mixing little with the busy world, and complaining of the debauchery of mankind. They maintain themselves wholly by their own labour, and utterly despise wealth, being fully content with bare necessities. They follow no traffic, because it is attended with so much lying, swearing, and cheating. They are chaste and temperate, are never seen in public houses, or amused by the trifling gaieties of life. You find them always employed, either learning or teaching. They are concise and devout in their prayers, blaming an unanimated prolixity. They never swear ; speak little ; and in their public preaching they lay the chief stress on charity. They never mind canonical hours, because they say that a Paternoster or two, repeated with devotion, are better than tedious hours spent without devotion. They explain the Scriptures in a different way from the holy doctors and the church of Rome. They speak little and humbly, and are well-behaved in appearance." He says, "they are great enemies to the clergy ; they despise and set the church of Rome at nought ; they confound truth and falsehood to deceive the people," &c.

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 1473.

<sup>2</sup> Henry's Hist. of Britain.

<sup>3</sup> Sancho Reinher.

III. From the Gospellers of England, as we have seen, sprang the Hussites of Bohemia. Wickliff was the spiritual father of both people. From among the latter stood up two remarkable witnesses for the truth, John Huss, and Jerome of Prague, who bore their testimony before the celebrated Council of Constance; and by these moral reformers of the popedom both were put to death, as a service done to God. The former of these witnesses was brought over to the knowledge of the truth by the books of Wickliff, which a Bohemian gentleman, who had studied at Oxford, carried thence into his own country. Jerome was a faithful adherent of Huss; he also had travelled in England, for the sake of study, and had collected there the works of Wickliff. Huss had been confessor<sup>1</sup> to the queen of Bohemia, and was known as a popular preacher, and at that time was at the head of the university of Prague.

The doctrinal knowledge of the Bohemian reformer, Mr. Milner observes, "was indeed always very limited and defective; but the little fundamental light which, through grace, he attained, was directed to the best practical purposes. He preached loudly against the abuses of the Romish church; and particularly against the impostures of false miracles which then abounded." Hatred and persecution from the papal clergy followed of course; he was silenced by the archbishop of Prague, and excommunicated at Rome<sup>2</sup>; and the works of Wickliff were publicly committed to the flames. Jerome was a master of arts in the same university, and had vigorously seconded Huss in his endeavours to promote a reformation in Bohemia. The excommunicated pastor received a summons to appear before the Council of Constance, where all the powers of the Roman world, civil and ecclesiastical, either in person or by their representatives, were assembled. Though Huss had received a safe conduct from the Emperor Sigismund, he went not without a presentiment of what would follow. By a letter which he wrote to a friend immediately before he left Prague, he entreats him, on the outside of it, not to open the letter till he should have had certain news of his death. When he was setting out, his friend Jerome exhorted him to constancy; and promised, if he should hear that he was oppressed, to come himself to Constance and support him; and Huss departed, attended by a faithful adherent, John, Count de Chlum. The peculiarity of the case of Huss was, that though in fact he held many things in common

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 1400.

<sup>2</sup> A.D. 1410.

with the papists, enough in usual circumstances to have saved him, he was considered as a disciple of Wickliff, and whatever he had maintained, Huss was accused of holding, without any respect to the representations he was ready to make. The emperor was persuaded, by the council, to violate his safe conduct, by the application of a maxim of the Romish church, that "faith was not to be kept with heretics;" and he shamefully committed him to a noisome dungeon, notwithstanding a remonstrance of the Bohemian nobility against the injustice of the act.

Jerome forgot not his promise to his friend, but followed Huss to Constance. Being refused, however, a safe conduct, and seeing he could be of no support to Huss, as he was not permitted to be heard before the council, he retired, but was arrested, and led back in chains to Constance; and after a tumultuous examination, he remained ten days bound to a post, with his hands chained to his neck, being fed with bread and water.

Under the imputation of being disciples of the English reformer, the two martyrs, it is evident, were bound with these chains. Accordingly, part of the business of the council, while they lay in prison, was to extract from the books of Wickliff what they considered as his heresies, and to pronounce on them a solemn sentence of condemnation. The martyrs were impelled to anathematise Wickliff, and solemnly retract his opinions. Against this Huss was enabled to make a noble stand. He refused to retract, and thus own himself guilty of errors which he had never maintained; and as to what had been extracted from his own works, he readily agreed to renounce and condemn whatever could be shewn to be contrary to the holy Scriptures, but not otherwise. Nothing, however, would satisfy the council, but a full retractation, in submission to its authority as representing the holy church. For his firm refusal Huss was degraded, and delivered to the secular arm, to be burnt to death. His letters, while in prison, awaiting his dreadful sentence, discover the state of his mind. "Almighty God will confirm the hearts of his faithful people, whom he has chosen from the foundation of the world, that they may receive the eternal crown of glory." "I am greatly comforted by those words of our Saviour, 'Happy are ye, when men shall hate you, and shall separate you from their company,' &c. O precious consolatory lesson! difficult indeed, not to understand, but to practise in time of tribulation!" "It is a light matter to speak of patience, but a great matter to fulfil it. Our most patient champion himself, who knew that he should rise again on the third day, and re-



deem from damnation his elect, was troubled in spirit; yet he, though sore troubled, said to his disciples, 'Let not your hearts be troubled,' " &c.

The papal clergy, in order to degrade him, put on him the priestly garments, and placed the sacramental cup in his hand. The devoted martyr recollected, to his comfort, how his Redeemer had been arrayed with royal robes in mockery. When they addressed him in their form of degradation, "O cursed Judas! who having forsaken the council of peace, art entered into that of the Jews, we take this chalice from thee, in which is the blood of Jesus Christ." "I trust," cried the martyr, "in the mercy of God, I shall drink of it new this very day in his kingdom." When they had finished stripping him, they placed on his head a paper coronet, painted with devils, saying, "We devote thy soul to the infernal devils."—"I am glad," said Huss, "to wear this crown of ignominy for the love of Him who wore a crown of thorns." Thus was he led to the stake, crying, "Lord Jesus, I humbly suffer this cruel death for thy sake, and I pray thee to forgive all mine enemies." When he was the last time called upon to retract, he said, "What I have written and taught, was in order to rescue souls from the power of the devil, and to deliver them from the tyranny of sin; and I do gladly seal with my blood what I have written and taught."

As for poor Jerome, who was so ready to go with him to prison and to death, he was permitted to know his weakness; and afterwards, out of weakness, was made strong indeed. Through fear of the dreadful death, he had been induced to retract,—to anathematise the articles both of Wickliff and of Huss, and to declare that he believed every thing that the council believed. The council, not content with their victory, would bring him to a second trial, that they might enjoy a second triumph; but now it was that Jerome rose superior from his fall, and discovered a fortitude, a wisdom, and an eloquence, that extorted the admiration of his enemies, so that they seemed almost to feel some relenting. Nevertheless, they hardened their hearts, and delivered him to death, as he renounced his retraction, bitterly lamenting, "I am not ashamed here to make public confession of my cowardice. I confess, and tremble while I think of it, that through fear of punishment by fire, I basely consented, against my conscience, to the condemnation of the doctrine of Wickliff and Huss." The assembly that condemned

<sup>1</sup> Poggins.—See Milner, vol. iv. p. 265.



him, as a Roman catholic writer<sup>1</sup> then present declares, was “very unruly and indecent;” though, he says, at the same time, in admiration of his eloquence, “every ear was captivated, and every heart touched.” In the midst of scorn and insult, he was led to execution, singing the Apostles’ Creed and the hymns of the church, with a loud voice and cheerful countenance. He kneeled at the stake, and prayed. Being then bound, he raised his voice, and sang a paschal hymn then much in vogue in the church,—for they that put him to death had a form of godliness.

Hail! happy day, and ever be adored,  
When hell was conquered by great heaven’s Lord.

Another Roman catholic historian records, both of John Huss and of Jerome, that “they went to the stake as to a banquet; not a word fell from them which discovered the least timidity. They sang in the flames to the last gasp, without ceasing.”

The murder of Huss was highly resented in Bohemia, as a national affront. It is said, that a Bohemian nobleman, known by the name of Zisca, the one-eyed, being asked by the king what he was musing upon, replied: “I was thinking on the affront offered to our kingdom by the death of John Huss.”—“It is out of your power or mine to revenge it,” said the king; “but if you know which way to do it, exert yourself.” From that time, Zisca meditated those military projects, for which he was afterwards so famous in history. Thus, although the true Christian is forbidden to revenge himself, the persecutor often finds to his cost, that all parties interested, are not of the same spirit; but some, instead of being content to be counted as sheep for the slaughter, meet them as ravening wolves, or “as the bear robbed of her whelps.”

The favourers of Huss, under the command of Zisca<sup>1</sup> and Nicholas de Hussinetz, exerted themselves in opposition to the hierarchy, in open warfare, carrying fire and sword into their territories and possessions. They are said, to the number of forty thousand, to have collected together at a mountain, called afterwards Tabor, from the circumstance of their erecting their tents there. The distinguishing tenet of these military reformers, was their use of the cup in the sacrament, which the Romanists had of late years denied to the laity. This contest caused much bloodshed, and threw the whole kingdom of Bohemia into confusion. A furious war was carried on for three years, under the

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 1417.

famous Zisca, and for ten years after his death. They obtained almost incredible victories over the emperor, and the warfare is marked by inhuman cruelties on both sides.

When the work of vengeance was complete, these Hussites obtained what they fought for — the use of the cup in the sacrament, and the administration of the ordinance in their own language. “ After the effusion of a deluge of blood, these points were given up by the papal party, in the year 1433, and a treaty of peace was made, of which these formed the basis. In other respects, the Calixtines resembled the papists, by whose artifices they were even induced to persecute the genuine followers of Huss, — those who desired a real reformation of the church, and the establishment of purity of doctrine and discipline<sup>1</sup>. ”

From among these reformers first appeared the Moravians, though they date, among themselves, their origin at a much higher antiquity. About the year 1453, a number of them obtained permission to withdraw to the lordship of Lititz, on the confines of Silesia and Moravia, and there to regulate a plan of worship according to their own consciences. Michael Bradazius was appointed their minister ; idolatrous rites were prohibited, and a strictness of discipline, resembling that of the primitive church, was instituted<sup>2</sup>, so that the church of the United Brethren may be called the most ancient of the reformed churches ; for, with respect to the Waldenses, the evidence perhaps is not complete, that they had at any time been united to apostate Rome. The severest persecution was their lot for ten years, when they were driven out of the country, and compelled to hide themselves in mountains and woods, and to live in the wilderness. They afterwards<sup>3</sup> received a great increase of their numbers, from the accession of the Waldensian refugees, who had escaped out of Austria, where Stephen, the last bishop of the Waldenses in that province, was burnt alive. A union was easily formed between the Waldenses and Hussites, on account of the similarity of their sentiments and manners. In the following year, the Hussites were banished from Moravia ; but they returned into that country six years afterwards. In the beginning of the sixteenth century, they counted two hundred congregations in Bohemia and Moravia.

<sup>1</sup> Milner.

<sup>2</sup> A.D. 1457.

<sup>3</sup> A.D. 1480.

A  
SHORT HISTORY  
OF  
THE CHURCH OF CHRIST,  
ETC. ETC.

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PART THE THIRD.

THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST FROM THE  
REFORMATION TO OUR OWN TIMES.

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INTRODUCTION.

AFTER pursuing our course through a thousand years of obscurity and darkness, we proceed with the history of the church during the last three centuries, which includes the history of the Reformation in the sixteenth century, with the convulsions which it immediately produced among the nations of Europe, and of the events which have since more remotely flowed from that same source. This is the last ACCOMPLISHED ERA of ecclesiastical history; and its boundaries may perhaps not improperly be fixed in the age in which we have lived. The spread, the decay or corruption, and the partial revivals of that same blessed truth, which then seemed afresh to illuminate the minds of men, form the leading topics of this portion of the history of the church.

“ This grand revolution,” it has also been observed<sup>1</sup>, “ may justly be considered as the main spring which has moved the nations from that illustrious period, and has occasioned the greater part of the civil as well as religious revolutions that

<sup>1</sup> Mosheim.

fill the annals of history to our own times." I shall, therefore, as far as my limits permit, endeavour to trace —

I. The rise, the struggles, and the victorious issue of the Reformation in Germany.

II. Its immediate effects in the mighty convulsions it produced in the other nations of Europe.

III. In a very brief and general narrative, not trespassing much upon the secret and confidential retreats of biography, where the events and characters of this last period will be studied to the best advantage, I shall bring down the history of the church of Christ to our own times, during which we seem all sensible that a new era has gone forth.

A revolution in opinions, as great, though not so blessed in its objects, as that which took place at the Reformation, has again torn up the boundaries of civilised nations, and is still replete with events probably more momentous still to churches and nations, and to the whole family of mankind. Before the commencement of this period, except in some few favoured spots, the lights of scriptural knowledge, rekindled in the churches of the reformed, had every where waxed dim, and seemed ready to be extinguished. Through the corruptions of infidelity and the ravages of war — "the pestilence that walked in darkness," and "the destruction which wasted at noon-day" — the very profession of the Christian religion was thought, indeed, to be in danger. But even in the midst of these troublous times, religion has begun anew to flourish, especially in those parts of the earth over which the British kingdoms and their offspring are spread. The professors of the truth, in every part of the world, having stemmed the torrent of the infidel philosophy, have been encouraged to aim at greater things for the propagation of 'the everlasting Gospel;' and notwithstanding the awful prospects around, and even the apprehension in some quarters, in the present political state of Europe, of the danger of a temporary relapse into the superstitions of the church of Rome, they may justly fill their breasts with the expectations of great and wonderful events shortly to come to pass, according to the sure word of prophecy. But, on this new era, the latent causes of its rise, its devastations, and the prospects which now disclose themselves in the partially retiring storm, this history does not enter<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> The parts of prophecy which the reader will compare with this portion of the history of the church, will be, 1. The death and resurrection of the Wit-

## CHAPTER THE FIRST.

## THE REFORMATION IN GERMANY.

MARTIN LUTHER, the great instrument of Providence in bringing about this reformation, was born<sup>1</sup> at Isleben, in the county of Mansfield. His father wrought in the mines of that place, and after the birth of Martin, he became a proprietor in them, and removed to the town of Mansfield. He bestowed a liberal education on his son, who early displayed great abilities, and particularly a taste for eloquence. He pursued his studies at Magdeburg, Eisenach, and Erfurt, at which latter place he commenced Master of Arts at the age of twenty<sup>2</sup>, and was the admiration of the whole university for his superior genius and extraordinary memory. Luther had begun to apply himself to the study of the civil law, intending to devote his well-adapted talents to the pleadings of the bar, to be afterwards employed, as his parents fondly hoped, for the advantage of the state.

But a superior Power had chosen him for another service. The sudden death of an intimate friend, in a storm of thunder that had exceedingly alarmed the mind of Luther himself, or, according to very creditable authors, the murder of that friend and this alarming storm together had made a deep impression on his mind. Melancthon seems not to have known any thing concerning the storm; his account is: "As himself has told me, and as many persons well know, while he deeply reflected on the astonishing instances of Divine vengeance, so great alarm would suddenly affect his whole frame, as almost to frighten him to death. I was once present when, through intense exertion of mind, in the course of an argument respecting some point of doctrine, he was so terrified, as to retire to a neighbour's chamber, place himself on the bed, and pray aloud, frequently repeating these words: 'He hath concluded all under sin, that he might have mercy upon all!' The alarming agitations came upon him either for the first time, or certainly they were severest, in that year when he lost an intimate companion, who was killed, but I know not by what accident."

nesses, Rev. xi. 2. The earthquake which, at the same time, shook the Great City. 3. He will, perhaps, see cause to connect with the rise of the new era which bounds our narrative, the sounding of the Seventh Angel himself.

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 1483.

<sup>2</sup> A.D. 1503.

These severe mental exercises induced Luther to form a secret resolution, or, as some represent, the terrors of the impending storm led him to make a solemn vow, of quitting his worldly schemes, and throwing himself into a monastery. Having called his particular friends together, and entertained them in his usual way with music and a convivial treat, he, to their surprise, declared his intentions. The next morning he wrote them farewell letters, and to the excessive grief of his parents he sent them the ring and gown which belonged to him as Master of Arts, acquainting them with his resolutions, and thus, as far as they could see, destroying every prospect of the future advantages of those great talents now to be buried in a monastery<sup>1</sup>. By one of his letters it appears that, from the very beginning of his monastic life, he was constantly sad and dejected; and being unable to give peace to his mind, he at length opened his griefs to John Staupitius, vicar-general of the Augustin monks, to whose society he now belonged. The reply of this ecclesiastic was very remarkable, and shews us that all religious wisdom had not perished from the earth: "You do not know how necessary and useful this trial may be to you; God does not thus exercise you for nothing; you will one day see that he will employ you, as his servant, for great purposes."

It is mentioned as a circumstance of importance, that in the second year after his entrance, he met with a Latin BIBLE in the library of the monastery. This may serve as an instance how much the sacred volume was neglected and forgotten. A student, a Master of Arts, had never met even with a Latin copy of the Scriptures; and, except so far as they were embodied in the church service, was altogether ignorant of their contents!

In this year also, in his sickness, he received consolation from an old monk, especially concerning the doctrine of the remission of sins. The monk told him it was the express commandment of God, that we should believe our sins to be forgiven us in Christ; he shewed where Bernard taught the same doctrine, and proved it by St. Paul. "This conversation," says Melancthon, "proved a great comfort to the mind of Luther. He was led to attend to St. Paul's doctrine of justification by faith, so often inculcated by that apostle. By reading and comparing together different parts of the Old and New Testament, and by an increased dependence on God in daily prayer, he gradually acquired more light, and saw the

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 1505.

emptiness of the usual interpretations of Scripture." At this time, also, the works of Augustin became his favourite study.

Luther was ordained in the year 1507. That there was something particular in his preaching, seems attested by what is recorded of the observation of a certain doctor who heard him. "This monk," said he, "will confound all the doctors, will exhibit new doctrines, and reform the whole Roman church; for he is intent on reading the writings of the prophets and apostles, and he depends on the word of Jesus Christ; this neither the philosophers nor sophists can subvert." Melancthon says: "He shewed the difference between the Law and the Gospel; he refuted the ancient Pharisaical error at that time prevalent both in the schools and in the pulpit, that men by their own works may merit the remission of sins, and be accounted righteous before God. Thus he called men's minds to the office of the Son of God; and, like John the Baptist, shewed them the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world. Moreover, he taught them that remission of sins is freely for Christ's sake, and that this benefit is to be received by faith."

These are the fundamental principles of the blessed Reformation, which the old monk had been taught in secret, and which the doctor before referred to had the sagacity to see would overturn the whole system of papal Christianity, and reform, if received, the whole Roman church.

"In fact," continues Melancthon, with historical veracity, "a false philosophy, and the succeeding errors of Pelagius, had exceedingly corrupted the pure faith of the Scriptures. St. Augustin was raised up by God to restore it in a measure; and I doubt not, but if he could now judge of the controversies of the present age, he would be decidedly with us." "It is our bounden duty to give particular thanks to God, that he has been pleased, through Luther's means, to restore to us the light of the Gospel; and it is also our duty to preserve and spread the doctrine which he taught. It is this doctrine which must guide our prayers, and even our whole lives—it is this doctrine of which the Son of God says, 'If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.' With my whole heart, I pray the eternal God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that for his own and his Son's glory, he would collect together the eternal church by the voice of his Gospel; and may he direct our wills by his Holy Spirit, and preserve in its purity



that doctrine which he has revived among us through the ministry of Martin Luther!"

In the year after his ordination<sup>1</sup>, Luther was invited to the professorship at Wittemberg, where the elector of Saxony had established a university, and Wittemberg became the scene of the reformer's future labours. Soon after he had taken his residence at this town<sup>2</sup>, he was deputed as their advocate, by certain monasteries of the Augustine friars, in a cause pending at Rome: this gave him an opportunity of seeing "the great city which ruled over the kings of the earth," whose dominion he was destined so considerably to diminish. At Rome, "the hireling shepherds" and himself were mutually disgusted with each other. They ridiculed the solemn manner in which he read the services of the church—for he was in earnest; they bid him 'read faster.' "I performed mass," he says, "at Rome; I saw it also performed by others, but in such a manner, that I never think of it without horror!" The same year he was created doctor of divinity; and such were the times, that he had not till then applied himself to the study of the Greek and Hebrew languages. To these studies, it seems, he was excited by the works of Erasmus of Rotterdam, who was at this time reviving the knowledge of classical literature; and who, by his satirical attacks, had so brought the barbarous and sophistical learning of the monks into contempt, and so exposed their hypocritical and superstitious devotions, that he was evidently preparing the way for future reformers. The monks, indeed, stung with his satire, declared that "Erasmus had laid the egg, and Luther had hatched it." But this great and useful man, as it afterwards appeared, intended not such a reformation as Luther was now being prepared to accomplish.

In the year 1516, the shaft was not yet drawn from the quiver. Luther writes to a friend, "I desire to know what your soul is doing; whether, wearied at length with its own righteousness, it learns to refresh itself, and to rest in the righteousness of Christ? The temptation of presumption in our age is strong in many, and especially in those who labour to be just and good with all their might, and at the same time are ignorant of the righteousness of God, which in Christ is conferred upon us with a rich exuberance of gratuitous liberality. They seek in themselves to work that which is good, in order that they may have a confidence of standing before God,

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 1508.

<sup>2</sup> A.D. 1512.

adorned with virtues and merits, which is an impossible attempt. You, my friend, used to be of this same opinion, or rather of this same mistake : so was I—but now I am fighting against the error, but have not yet prevailed.”

In this same year he was appointed subaltern vicar in the order of the Augustine monks, and, as visiter, inspected forty of their monasteries. On his return to Wittemberg, in June, he wrote to Spalatinus, his friend, and secretary to the elector, a letter in which the spirit of the reformer plainly appears<sup>1</sup>. “Many things please your prince, and look great in his eyes, which are displeasing to God. In secular wisdom, I confess that he is of all men most knowing; but in things pertaining to God, and which relate to the salvation of souls, I must own that he is blind sevenfold.” In October of the same year, he writes to the same friend his thoughts concerning certain of the fathers, and also concerning Erasmus’s method of interpreting Scripture. “What strikes my mind in considering Erasmus, is this; in interpreting the apostle’s account of the righteousness of works, or of the law, he understands by these terms ceremonial observances *only*. In the next place, though he admits the doctrine of original sin, he will not allow that the apostle speaks of it in the fifth chapter to the Romans. Now, if he had carefully read Augustin’s anti-Pelagian tracts, especially his account of the spirit and of the letter, of the guilt of sin and the remission of it; and had observed how he speaks in perfect unison with the best of the fathers, from Cyprian to Ambrose, he might have better understood the apostle Paul, and also have conceived more highly of Augustin as an expositor, than he has hitherto done.” “The righteousness of the law is by no means confined to ceremonies; for, though it includes these, it still more directly respects an obedience to the whole decalogue; which obedience, when it takes place to a certain degree, and yet has not Christ for its foundation, though it may produce such men as your Regulus’s and your Fabricius’s, that is, very upright moralists according to man’s judgment, has nothing in it of the nature of genuine righteousness.” “I fear many may be induced, by the authority of his name, to patronise that literal and lifeless mode of interpreting the Scripture, into which almost all commentators have fallen since the time of Augustin<sup>2</sup>.”

“This illustrates in what school Luther was formed.

<sup>1</sup> Seckend. p. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Milner.

About this time he preached before Duke George of Dresden ; the sum of his sermon was this—That no man ought to despair of the possibility of salvation ; that those who heard the word of God with attentive minds, were true disciples of Christ, and were elected and predestinated to eternal life. He enlarged on the subject, and shewed that the whole doctrine of predestination, if the foundation be laid in Christ, was of singular efficacy to dispel the fear by which men trembling under a sense of their own unworthiness, are tempted to flee from God, who ought to be our sovereign refuge.” A lady of the court was asked by the duke, how she liked the discourse : “ I should die in peace,” was her reply, “ if I could hear such another sermon.” The duke in much anger said, “ I would give a large sum of money, that a sermon of this sort, which encourages men in a licentious course of life, had never been preached ;” and he repeated this several times. The lady died about a month afterwards, “ rejoicing in the prospects of future glory.” Duke George proved a determined enemy to the reformation.

“ Luther at this time,” Melancthon informs us, “ was not meditating the smallest innovation on the customary observances. On the contrary, he was a most rigid disciplinarian, and had broached nothing to alarm ; but he was illustrating more and more those doctrines of which *all* stand in need—the doctrines of repentance, remission of sins, faith, and the true consolations of the cross. Pious Christians, (for such we see there were in the midst of papal corruptions,) were delighted with these things ; and even learned men were much pleased to see Christ, the prophets, and the apostles, brought, as it were, out of darkness and prison ; and to hear of the difference between Law and Gospel, and their promises ; and between philosophy and the Word of God ; concerning which important matters, not a line was to be found in Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, and such like,” &c. Luther considered these doctrines as perfectly orthodox, according to the more ancient authorities, which the church of Rome herself had always professed to reverence. The doctrine of merits and Pelagianism he would consider as modern corruptions, which had inadvertently crept in, to the destruction of the ancient faith. He was very far, as yet, from supposing all the abominations that he beheld in the practice of the times, to have originated in the antichristian character of the popedom. But it was in the memorable year 1517, that he was interrupted in the con-

scientious discharge of his duties as a pastor, by one of the most flagrant abuses of the papal superstition ; and, by a train of undesigned and unforeseen events, was led forth from the peaceful exercise of his ministry, to be the public champion of the truth, against the whole system of antichristian delusions. These slowly yet gradually unfolded themselves to his view, as he proceeded ; and as he saw them, he denounced and attacked them, and in the minds of multitudes overthrew them all.

As he was hearing confessions, in this year, some persons who had owned themselves to him to be atrocious offenders, refused to comply with the penances he had enjoined them, “ assigning as a reason, that they had procured diplomas of indulgences.” Luther could not have been ignorant of the practice of granting indulgences in his church, nor did he mean at this time to question the practice itself ; but this application struck him as wrong, and the mystery of iniquity began to be explored. He ventured to refuse absolution. The rejected penitents, thus robbed of the benefit of their purchase, complained to the papal agent, who was preaching up his pardons in the neighbourhood. The agent stormed and threatened, and Luther was drawn into a contest, which soon began to open his eyes to more than he even suspected.

As the papal monarchy had arisen in the church from the misapplication of a text of Scripture — “ Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church,” — so, the practice of penance, judicial absolution, and the consummation of the craft — the sale of indulgences — had also originated in the perversion of Christ’s commission to his apostles, whereby he constituted them the ministers of his grace to mankind, and the authorised dispensers of his reproofs. “ As my Father has sent me, even so I send you ; and when he had said this, he breathed upon them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost : whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained<sup>1</sup>.” The apostles, and their faithful successors in the ministry of the Word, understood themselves, we know, to be the heralds of their Master’s will, “ ambassadors for Christ,” and “ stewards of the mysteries of God,” having authority from him to declare to the believing penitent that his sins were pardoned, and to denounce his wrath against all the impenitent and unbelieving. This commission they exercised to the joy of many, for their word came with

<sup>1</sup> John, xi. 21, &c.

power; and to the condemnation of others who heard but believed not. We discover no other way in which even the twelve remitted or retained sins. They professed themselves not to be “lords over the people’s faith,” but “helpers of their joy;” and this is the true foundation of the Christian ministry.

In the primitive church, we all along perceive the formal and public exercise of this commission, in the absolving of penitent offenders: it was one of the peculiar functions of the Christian ministry, a main object of the fellowship of saints. When religion had lost its power, still the form remained; the herald pronounced the words of the institution, and the nominal Christian attended to hear them, when, perhaps, both had lost their confidence in the remission of sins through the blood of Christ, and few hearts were touched with true spiritual repentance. It was a mistake too easy to be made, when such a departure from faith and spirituality had taken place, for the people to trust to the form alone; it was but too natural for the faithless messenger to usurp honours due only to his Master, and to convert the sacred institution of his office to his own personal interest and emolument. The corruption, of course, would be gradual, and would make its way in different proportions in different circumstances. The first symptom we perceive of it, is the superstitious veneration of the almost mediating priest, as if the application of mercy was under his direction and control.

The primitive ministers, no doubt, exhorted the penitents to do works meet for repentance, attesting their sincerity; but when the doctrine of human merit, of the satisfaction of works, and of “voluntary humility,” crept in, the pardon was no longer freely vouchsafed, but on the stipulated condition of certain works, or services, or personal sacrifices; hence the doing of *penance*, in the Roman catholic sense of the term. These works of penance might be certain charities prescribed by the priest, or austerities inflicted on the body, or gifts for the erection of churches, or for adorning them, or for the support or multiplying of their services, and at one time for pilgrimages to holy places, or crusades against infidels or heretics. The power of commuting some of these services might soon be found convenient, and money was received instead, to be applied, of course, to pious uses, for the benefit of the offender’s soul. But the satisfaction and merit of works being once established, if some persons had less than satisfied the demand, others, whether among the living or with departed saints, who were extraordinarily holy persons, and had spent their lives in devotions, in fastings and prayers, or

other meritorious services or sufferings, might be supposed to have more than satisfied for themselves ; — hence originated works of *supererogation*, and the supposed *mediation of saints*. For to what purpose could this superabundance of merit be applied, but to the aid of the weaker or more offending brother, who claimed their assistance ? But suppose, on this system, that the penitent had not performed his quota of satisfaction for sin, or brought in full tale his required merits, at the hour of death, what must become of his soul ? It was necessary and merciful to suppose a place for purification after death, in the unseen world, — hence the invention of *purgatory*, and prayer and services for departed souls. The superabundance of the deserts of all holy saints and martyrs, might be thought applicable to this need also. And the church being possessed of so great a treasure, who was so proper to keep the key, and superintend the distribution, as he who sat in Peter's chair, the Vicar of God upon earth ? Hence the *plenary indulgence* of the pope and his agents. And if the credulity of mankind would bear it, the pope might sell as well as give, and we have the consummation of popish craft, the sale of indulgences. And so it was, in these superstitious ages, that from the permission to eat eggs in Lent, to the cleansing from the guilt of murder, and the striking off of long periods of suffering, in the place of purgatory, — all might now be bought at a price of the pope and his agents.

The wants of the papal court, under the magnificent Leo X., at this time pontiff, which had caused extraordinary exertions to be made to promote the more extensive sale of these indulgences, to defray the expense of building the church of St. Peter at Rome, was the particular object held forth ; but, indeed, the sale of these indulgences had long been reckoned one of the regular branches of the papal revenues<sup>1</sup>. And, as if blinded by avarice, or too secure in the credulity of mankind, the Court of Rome had farmed out these revenues to different agents, who, in their respective districts, employed persons of the greatest effrontery, to hawk them as merchandise about the country, and to preach up their efficacy, in language the most extravagant and absurd. It was one of these subordinate agents, of the name of Tetzel, that Luther first encountered, and in this shape the sale of indulgences might be something new to him ; and indeed, it was severely reprobated by some sincere friends of the papacy. In consequence, however, of the public theses which Luther

<sup>1</sup> See Father Paul's Hist. of the Council of Trent.



published against these indulgences, persons of greater eminence entered the list against him ; particularly Eckius, and Prierias, master of the sacred palace at Rome ; and he soon found himself involved in a dispute of which he could then better foresee the danger than the success. He declares that “ he was filled with grief to see the true doctrine of repentance superseded by indulgences.” “ To the kind admonition of my friends, who would warn me of my danger, my answer is, The poor man has no fears.” “ I have only a frail body to lose, and that weighed down with constant fatigue. If, in obedience to God, I lose it through violence or fraud, what is the loss of a few hours of life ? Sufficient for me, is the lovely Redeemer and Advocate — my Lord Jesus Christ, to whose praise I will sing as long as I live.”

His own reflections, many years afterwards, afford us the best view of his situation at this period. “ How weak and contemptible was I, and in how fluctuating a state of mind, when I began this business” of the indulgences ! “ I found myself involved in it alone, and, as it were, by surprise. And when it became impossible for me to retreat, I made my concessions to the pope ; not, however, in many important points ; but certainly at that time I adored him in earnest. In fact, how despised and wretched a monk was I then ! more like a lifeless body than a human being ! Whereas, with regard to the pope, how great was his majesty ! The potentates of the earth trembled at his nod. How distressed was I in that year, 1517, and the following ; how submissive my mind was to the hierarchy, not feignedly but really ; nay, how I was almost driven to despair, through the agitations of care, and fear, and doubt, those secure spirits little know, who, at this day, insult the majesty of the pope with much pride and arrogance ! But I, who then alone sustained the danger, was not so certain, not so confident. I was ignorant of many things which now, by the grace of God, I understand. I disputed, and was open to conviction. Not finding satisfaction in the books of Theologians and Canonists, I wished to consult the living members of the church itself. There were indeed some godly souls, who entirely approved my propositions ; but I did not consider their authority as of weight with me in spiritual concerns. The popes, cardinal, bishops, and monks, were the objects of my confidence. I waited for divine instruction with such ardent and continued eagerness, and was so overloaded with cares, that I became almost stupid or distracted. I scarcely knew when I was asleep or when awake. At length, after I became enabled to answer every objection that could be brought



against me from the Scriptures, one difficulty yet remained, and only one, namely, that the CHURCH ought to be obeyed. By the grace of Christ, I at last overcame this difficulty also. Most certainly I had formerly a much greater veneration for the Roman church than those have, who at this day, with a perverse spirit of opposition, extol popery so exceedingly against me<sup>1</sup>."

These extracts will make us better acquainted with Luther's views and motives at this period, than all the conjectures of historians. From his writings, published in 1518, we learn, at the same time, upon what solid grounds he combated the abuse of papal indulgences. He maintains "that every true Christian may become a partaker of the grace of Christ, without pontifical indulgences. A Christian may glory that in Christ he has all things; that all the righteousness and merits of Christ are his own, by virtue of that spiritual union with him which he has by faith: on the other hand, that all his sins are no longer his, but that Christ, through the same union, bears the burden of them. And this is the confidence of Christians; this is the refreshment of their consciences, that by faith our sins cease to be ours judicially, because they are laid on Him, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world."

The pope treated the affair, at first, with indifference. "Brother Martin," he said, "*is a man of a very fine genius*, and these squabbles are the mere effusions of monastic envy." But roused at length by complaints on all sides, and especially by a letter from the emperor Maximilian, stating, that an "Augustine monk was disseminating heretical and destructive doctrines;" and "had made many converts, even among persons of rank and distinction," he suddenly yielded himself to the most violent and injudicious counsels. Luther was cited to appear at Rome. The elector of Saxony, who befriended him, being aware of the consequences, made every effort, and with great difficulty succeeded, to have his cause tried in Germany. Cardinal Cajetan was appointed as legate for that purpose. But it afterwards appeared that Luther had already been proceeded against at Rome, and had been judged and condemned as an incorrigible heretic; and Cajetan had even secret orders to seize his person, in order to his being sent to Rome. The elector, however, being well acquainted with these usual practices of the papal court, before he suffered Luther to obey the cardinal's summons to appear before him at Augsburg, took the precaution of procuring a safe-conduct from

<sup>1</sup> Milner, vol. iv. p. 356-7.

the magistrates of that city, and from the emperor himself; so that this scheme of the Roman policy was rendered abortive. By the supercilious cardinal, Luther was treated with great contempt, and was peremptorily called upon to recant, or expect to suffer punishment. Some circumstances of suspicion, and perhaps the recollection of the case of Huss, induced Luther, at length, to retire secretly from Augsburg. The cardinal was exceedingly blamed at Rome, “for his severe and illiberal treatment of Luther, at the very moment when he ought to have promised him great riches, a bishopric, or even a cardinal’s hat<sup>1</sup>.”

The situation of Luther was at this time full of danger and alarm. He was uncertain how far the elector of Saxony could further interfere in his behalf, and he had evidently apprehensions of being compelled to quit his situation at Wittemberg. “Every day I expect from Rome the arrival of the ecclesiastical anathemas; and I am, therefore, disposing of my affairs in such a manner, that when those curses shall arrive, I may be ready, like Abraham, to depart, not knowing whither.”

In this conjuncture, he received an express intimation from the elector, that it was his wish that he should not quit Wittemberg. If some of his former friends had appeared to shrink back from the contest in which he was engaged, the fruit of his labours in this rising university was encouraging, as their attachment to his person plainly manifested. Philip Melancthon was already his coadjutor here. Bucer and Brentius, and others, afterwards among the most famous reformers, were already known as the approvers of his doctrines. To avoid the censures he expected from Rome, he publicly appealed from the pope to a general council, well knowing that in the present state of the Roman catholic church, he should have many zealous defenders among his countrymen.

Although Luther had thought himself alone in opposing the papacy in its gainful traffic of indulgences, yet it had pleased God, almost at the same period, to raise up, in Switzerland, another witness against this abomination. This was Ulricus Zuinglius, a doctor in divinity. The same year in which Luther, struck with the awful concerns of eternity, retired into his monastery, Zuinglius had been impressed with a sermon which he heard from a person of the name of Wittenbach, who asserted that “the death of Christ is the full price of our redemption, and that

<sup>1</sup> Father Paul. — Milner.

indulgences were but a device of the pope." We immediately find him a zealous and successful preacher, first at Glaris, and in the year 1516 at the Hermitage, a place famous for pilgrimages to the Virgin Mary. Soon after, he was called to take the principal charge in the city of Zurich, where he heard of Luther's bold stand in Germany, against the papal indulgences. In the summer of 1518, Samson, another Tetzal, made his appearance at Zurich, to prosecute the scandalous traffic in indulgences. Zuinglius boldly withstood him, and received some countenance at first from the bishop of Constance; the reformer's views, however, soon extended beyond the removal of this one abuse.

In Germany, the interest of the elector of Saxony had arrested the blow of papal vengeance which had been aimed at Luther, with the intent to crush him; and in the beginning of the year 1519 the emperor Maximilian died. In the interregnum, "the prince elector, duke of Saxony, as vicar of the empire," was able to afford Luther a still more secure protection. "The violent tempest," he says, "subsided by little and little; and the pontifical thunders of excommunication were gradually more and more despised." The measures of Rome were evidently changed for a small interval, both towards Frederic and Luther. Miltitz, a Saxon knight, was sent by the pope on a more conciliatory embassy. "The consecrated golden rose," the much courted papal present, was presented to the elector. Tetzal was openly rebuked, and Luther was prevailed upon to write a submissive letter to the pope. The matters in dispute were to be deferred to the first German diet of the new emperor. Luther was not insensible to this kind of treatment from the pope, whose office he still sincerely venerated. He remarks: "It is my judgment, that if the friends of the papacy and the pope himself had treated me in this manner at first, matters would never have come to so great a rupture." But it was now too late; principles had begun to be divulged in the question respecting indulgences, which could admit of no compromise. Notwithstanding Luther's love of peace, and his apprehension of the dangers of the contest, he could make, even at this time, no submission which could be deemed satisfactory. The popish historian Maimbourg says, "His letter to the pope was rather civil than humble; but it contained nothing to the purpose." Leo X. disdained to receive the submission; all appearance of a conciliatory spirit speedily departed from the court of Rome, and Luther was soon led into further and more serious contests with her emissaries.

At a public disputation at Leipsic<sup>1</sup>, Eckius artfully drew Luther into a controversy respecting the foundation of the pope's supremacy, contending that it was of 'Divine right.' Luther, who at this period had not called in question that supremacy, maintained that it rested only on 'ancient prescriptive right and universal consent,' which he admitted was indicative of the will of God. His own reflections at a subsequent period, on his conduct in this affair, were as follows: "My own case is a notable example of the difficulty with which a man emerges from erroneous notions of long standing. How true is the proverb, 'Custom is a second nature!' How true is that saying of Augustin, 'Habit, if not resisted, becomes necessity.' I, who, both publicly and privately, had taught divinity for seven years, insomuch that I retained in my memory almost every word of my lectures, was in fact at that time only just initiated into the knowledge and faith of Christ; I had only just learnt that a man must be justified and saved, not by works, but by the faith of Christ; and lastly, in regard to pontifical authority, though I publicly maintained that the pope was not the head of the church, by a 'Divine right,' yet I stumbled at the next step, namely, that the whole papal system was a Satanic invention. This I did not see, but contended obstinately for the pope's right, founded on human reasons; so thoroughly deluded was I, by the example of others, by the title of Holy church; and by my own habits."

The disputation at Leipsic seems, however, to have been one great occasion of opening the reformer's eyes to the true nature of the papacy. When he was admonished by his friend Spalatinus, the elector's secretary, "to observe in all things a reverential obedience towards the pope," his answer had been, "To separate myself from the apostolic see of Rome, is a thing that has never yet entered my mind." His next letter, however, intimates a discovery, new and unsuspected by himself. "That I may be the better qualified for the ensuing debate, I am turning over the decretals of the popes; and I would whisper into your ear, that I begin to entertain doubts whether the Roman pontiff be not the very Antichrist of the Scriptures, or his messenger; so wretchedly corrupted by him, in the decretals, are the pure doctrines of Christ." This, however, was a suspicion hardly entertained for the present in his own mind. He was still ready to hear of proposals of reconciliation, so that the

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 1519.

faithful preaching of the gospel should not be hindered ; and he makes a distinction between the pope himself, of whose private character he seems to have thought better than it deserved, and his corrupted court.

But his convictions of the true nature of the papacy were becoming stronger and stronger. He writes to Spalatinus early in 1520, " I am extremely distressed in my mind. I have not much doubt that the pope is the real Antichrist. The lives and conversations of the popes, their actions, their decrees, all agree most wonderfully to the descriptions of him in Holy Writ." The struggles of his mind under this growing conviction, and his remaining veneration for the person of Leo, can alone account for some things in his letter to the pope about this period. With his letter, he also sent his treatise on ' Christian Liberty,' of which the papal historian Maimbourg observes ; " Luther sent it to the pope for the purpose of insulting him." This can hardly be supposed to have been Luther's intention ; but he must have much misunderstood the character and disposition of Leo, — and not improbably through the insidious representations of Miltitz. Maimbourg's summary account of this tract is : " He represents faith as doing every thing. It justifies us, it makes us free, it saves us ; and all this without the help of good works, which are of no use towards salvation, even though they proceed from faith." Another writer, Du Pin, describes it as " full of pious maxims," but " Luther maintains in it his error of justification by faith alone. Yet he tells us he does not reject good works, but, on the contrary, exhorts men to practise them ; but he condemns those who do them with an opinion to be justified by them, and is persuaded that they make no man just."

After having hesitated for nearly three years, the pope, though against his better judgment, at the instigation of the friars who complained loudly of his neglect of the affairs of the state, for the indulgence of his pleasures, gave the business into the hands of his counsellors. The famous bull against Luther was issued on the fifteenth of June, 1520, though it did not reach Germany before the October following. In this bull, certain propositions extracted from the works of Luther, are condemned " as heretical, scandalous, and offensive to pious ears ; all persons are forbidden to read his writings, on pain of excommunication ; " " and he himself, if he did not, within sixty days, send or bring his retractation in form to Rome, is pronounced an obstinate heretic, is excommunicated, and delivered to Satan for the destruction of the flesh ; and all secular princes are required, uni

pain of incurring the same censures, and of forfeiting all their dignities, to seize his person, that he might be punished as his crimes deserved."

But the operation of Divine Providence, of which, though always ruling in the affairs of men, we are apt to lose sight, when we understand not its immediate bearings, becomes more visibly displayed than is usual, in all these transactions. These three years of fluctuating counsels, and of hesitation to strike the blow, had been three most critical years for the nurture and growth of the reforming spirit ; insomuch, that this bull in which Rome meant to put forth all her strength, proved, in the issue, a self-inflicted blow, more fatal to the papacy than any she had ever received.

Very early in the business of Indulgences, Luther had felt the state of the public mind around him : " The proclaiming and selling of pardons proceeded," he says, " to such an unbounded licentiousness, that the holy church and its authorities became objects of open derision in the public taverns. And yet there was no occasion to excite the hatred of mankind against priests in a greater degree. The avarice and profligacy of the clergy had for many years past kindled the indignation of the laity. Alas ! they have not a particle of respect or honour for the priesthood, except what arises solely from the fear of punishment ; and I speak plainly, unless their dislike and their objections be attended to and moderated, not by mere power, but by substantial reasons and reformation, all these evils will grow worse." These were Luther's reflections at a time when he sincerely venerated the Roman church, and would fain have healed her, and not have assisted in the overthrow of the papacy. The elector Frederic also, in the same year the bull was issued, had sent a warning voice to Rome, if she would have taken it, concerning the sentiments which were abroad. " There are now in Germany abundance of ingenious and learned persons, and the laity begin to grow skilful, and have a desire to understand the Scriptures." " The doctrines of Luther have taken deep root every where, and the effect must be done away by perspicuous and incontestable testimonies of *Scripture*, not by ecclesiastical processes contrived to oppress him and excite terror ; otherwise, it is most probable that the bitterest animosities and the most horrible and destructive convulsions will arise in Germany, which can be of no service either to his holiness the pope, or to any one else."

Dr. Milner observes, " An amazing revolution of sentiment



was taking place in the minds of people." "By the judicious and diligent explication of the written word of God, during the short space of the years 1518, 1519, and 1520, the systematic prejudices of many centuries were almost overturned in the minds of multitudes of the inhabitants of various parts of Europe."

Luther's mind was no doubt emboldened by these circumstances. He knew that his opinions were well received in many parts of the world; and even in the heart of Germany, many powerful nobles offered him shelter and protection against his enemies. The scenes around him, too, must have been particularly cheering. His 'Wittemberge,' the cradle of the reformation, was in a most flourishing state under his own tuition and that of Melancthon. "I myself," says Spalatinus, "have seen six hundred scholars attend the lectures of Melancthon, and four hundred those of Luther; but to contain the multitudes who flock to hear the sermons of Luther, neither the parish church nor that of the monastery is sufficiently large."

During the year 1520, the reformer's mind appears to have been made up respecting the true character of the popedom, and he published them without reserve or qualification. In the autumn of this year, came out his treatise on "the Babylonish captivity of the church." Rome is now pronounced to be "the mystic Babylon" of the prophetic Scriptures; and he expresses his sincere repentance for the concessions he had made two years ago, respecting the nature of indulgences. "He now understood them to be mere impostures, originating in iniquitous flattery," — "their object was to rob men of their money, and to pervert the faith of the Gospel." In his correspondence, he says, "As far as respects myself, the die is cast; papal wrath and papal favours are equally despised by me." "They will not succeed in this contest. The Lord, who knows me to be a most grievous sinner, will, I doubt not, finish his own work, either through me as his instrument, or through another." In October he writes: "At length the Roman Bull is come, and Eckius is its bearer. I treat it with contempt." He had already, it appears, resolved to treat it as his own writings had been treated at Rome and in other places, and to commit it publicly to the flames, in defiance of the papal authority; but for the present he affected to consider it as a "machination of Eckius." He says, at the same time, "I feel myself now more at liberty, being assured that the popedom is Antichristian, and the seat of Satan. My only prayer is, that God may preserve his own people from the impious seduction of Romish adherents."



The news, however, of the part likely to be taken by the new emperor Charles V., was somewhat calculated to daunt his spirit. "Erasmus writes that the emperor's court overflows with beggars and dependents, all disposed to promote tyrannical principles, so that there is no hope of Charles. No wonder! Trust not in princes, or in any child of man, for there is no help in them."

The first defensive measure of Luther, was to appeal from the sentence of the Romish pontiff to the superior authority of a general council. He appeals from him as "a rash, iniquitous, tyrannical judge;" — "as a hardened heretic, and apostate;" — "as an enemy, Antichrist, and opposer of the sacred Scripture;" — "as a proud and blasphemous despiser of the sacred Church of God, and of all legal councils." In the December following he published his tracts, "Martin Luther against the execrable Bull of Antichrist," and "A Defence of the Articles of Martin Luther, which are condemned by the Bull of Leo X." In this latter treatise he ably maintains the great principle of Protestantism, that the word of God is the sole judge in controversies of faith. "The sacred writings," he says, "are not to be understood but by that Spirit with which they were written; which Spirit is never felt to be more powerful and energetic than when HE attends the serious perusal of the writings which HE HIMSELF dictated. Setting aside an implicit dependence on all human writings, let us strenuously adhere to the Scriptures alone. The primitive church acted thus: she must have acted so; for she had seen no writings of the fathers. The Scripture is its own interpreter, trying, judging, and illustrating all things. If it be not so, why do Augustin and other holy fathers appeal to Scripture as the first principles of truth, and confirm their own assertions by its authority?" "Let the fathers be an example to us, and as they in their time laboured in the word of God, so let us in our days do the same. There is one vineyard, and there are labourers employed at different hours. It is enough that we have learned from the fathers the duty of studying and diligently labouring in the Scriptures; it is not necessary that we should approve of all their works." There are seasons when the diligence of many does not afford "what a critical opportunity alone gives to one," — "provided that that opportunity be connected with the incomprehensible energy of the Holy Spirit."

In the same month, he carried into execution his bold measure of defiance, and with a solemn procession of his university, he committed publicly to the flames, the volumes of the ponti-

fical law, and the pope's sentence. "Comparing together," he observed, "the different parts of the canon law, its language amounts to no less than this, that the pope is God on earth; above all that is earthly or heavenly, temporal or spiritual; that all things belong to the pope; and that no one must venture to say, What doest thou?" Thus was the Saxon reformer at issue with the power of Rome; and notwithstanding all his supporters, was likely, sooner or later, to fall a victim to that power. He had made up his mind; he was prepared for martyrdom, which in all probability would be his portion; but whatever became of him, he felt satisfied, that the cause itself in which he had embarked would finally prevail. It was not to be expected that she, who still sat a queen, would relinquish her authority without a tremendous struggle.

The measure, however, to which Luther had had recourse in appealing from the sentence of the pope to the superior authority of a general council, was, in the particular posture of the Roman catholic world at this era, a measure of great political sagacity, though it cannot be imagined that Luther, even at this period, would have submitted to the decisions of one of these ecclesiastical assemblies. But as we have seen in a former part of this work, this appeal was to touch the spiritual supremacy of the pope in a tender point. The Roman catholics had long been divided into two great parties; the one were for upholding the papal authority in all its pretensions and in all its abuses; but the other, in the character of moral reformers, though devoted to the same superstition and idolatrous worship, were very strenuous in asserting the liberties of national churches, and in maintaining against the advocates of the Court of Rome the superiority of general councils. On these grounds, a strong opposition had for some time existed to the papal claims, in the body of the clergy themselves; and a redress of grievances, and the regular periodical assemblies of these ecclesiastical parliaments, were favourite points contended for by the most respectable part of the Roman world. They were ready to commit Luther to the flames for his heresies, as the representatives of the Catholic church had done to Huss and Jerome, after they had broken their idol, and erected a new one, in the council of Constance; — yet they had so many personal complaints against the reigning powers at Rome, that they were not displeased to see her a little humbled, and to hear a demand for the assembling of a council, a measure which the artifices of the papal court had so long evaded. This state of things, and these divisions in the ecclesiastical stat

were, under the providence of God, highly conducive to the growth of the new opinions, which were making rapid progress in Germany, Switzerland, France, and England. Nothing, however, as yet foreboded, to a common observer, that dreadful convulsion which was to shake to its foundations the whole papal city, and level a portion of it with the ground.

Germany, "the highway of Europe<sup>1</sup>," appeared, at this time, to be the arena where the battles of Rome were to be fought; and she was artfully watching every opportunity to have the faithful witnesses for the truth, which had arisen there, silenced and suppressed. She had done what she could to expose them to execration, and was anxiously looking about for a willing instrument to "slay them with the sword." Much depended upon the new emperor, at that time the most powerful prince in Europe, who united Spain, the Netherlands, and Germany under his sceptre. His first diet, or assembly of the states of the German monarchy, was appointed to be held at Worms. Here the affair of Luther was to be considered and determined. Accordingly, the emperor, in his circular letters to the electors, and other members of the diet, informed them, that he had summoned the assembly of the empire, for the purpose of concerting with them the most proper measures for checking the progress of those new and dangerous opinions, which threatened to disturb the peace of Germany, and to overturn the religion of their ancestors<sup>2</sup>. The diet; from various causes, was for some time deferred. Meanwhile, Luther and his coadjutors were spreading the knowledge of the revived Gospel with the most fervent zeal, and with astonishing success. Maimbourg, the papal historian, who abhorred him, still fairly describes his labours. "Luther, in his sermons, attacked the vices of men with great acrimony: he likewise published, in the German and Latin languages, a number of religious books; for example, Expositions of the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments; of certain portions of the Epistles and Gospels; of the Song of the Blessed Virgin; of the Psalms; and particularly of the Epistle to the Galatians. Moreover, he lived a moral life, and was not given, in the smallest degree, to covetousness or any other vice; he was universally held to be a good and great, and even a sainted man; insomuch, that it was the custom to paint his portrait with rays of glory around his head, as if he had been a canonised saint<sup>3</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> De Foe.

<sup>2</sup> Robertson's Charles V.

<sup>3</sup> Maimbourg particularises the Comment on the Epistle to the Galatians; Dr. Milner remarks, that Luther's Commentary on the Epistle to the Gala-

In the erroneous doctrine, indeed, which St. Paul saw arising in the churches of Galatia, as we have before remarked, was the beginning of the working of "the mystery of iniquity," which led to the corruption of the church — to the great apostasy — and, as a consequence, to the erection of the popedom. The Galatians had embraced the Gospel, and had "begun in the Spirit," and "did run well;" but they were persuaded by false teachers, that works were necessary to their final acceptance with God: they would "be made perfect by the flesh," by religious and moral duties. This was similar to the doctrine of a "two-fold justification," prevalent among the Romanists. According to this system, they may be said, at least till Pelagianism spread among them, to have "begun in the Spirit," for they admitted that they were gratuitously saved by faith alone in the first place; but, to retain, to repair, and to perfect this salvation, in view of their eternal acceptance with God — which is justification in the apostle's sense — they united moral duties and religious observances. This was, therefore, to be justified by the law at last, to be "made perfect by the flesh;" but, if the afflicted conscience had received all that Christ would give gratuitously, and must earn the rest, still feeling deficiency, it was glad to lean on any help that might promise to satisfy for that defect; either on austerities endured, and works of voluntary humiliation per-

tians, in itself so excellent a performance, was read with so great avidity immediately after its publication, and was so instrumental in promoting the glorious cause of Protestantism, that it seems to have a superior claim to the attention of the historian." "I have repeatedly read and meditated on this treatise," observes Dr. Milner, "and, after most mature reflection, am fully convinced, that as it was one of the most powerful means of reviving the light of Scripture in the sixteenth century, so it will, in all ages, be capable of doing the same, under the blessing of God, whenever a disposition shall appear among men to regard the oracles of Divine Truth, and whenever souls shall be distressed with a sense of indwelling sin. For I perfectly despair of its being relished at all by any but serious, humble, and contrite spirits; such being indeed the only persons in the world to whom the all-important article of justification will appear worthy of all acceptation." "The Author himself had ploughed deep into the human heart, and knew its native depravity; he had long laboured, to no purpose, to gain peace of conscience by legal observances and moral works; and had been relieved from the most pungent anxiety, by a spiritual discovery of the doctrine just mentioned. He was appointed, in the counsels of Providence, — by no means exclusively of the other reformers, but in a manner more extraordinary and much superior, — to teach mankind, after upwards of a thousand years' obscurity, this great evangelical tenet, — compared with which how little appear all other objects of controversy! — namely, that man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Christ." — Vol. iv. p. 509.

formed, or on the mediation of persons supposed to be holier and more in the favour of God, whether living priests, or departed saints and martyrs. Hence, all the contrivances of "will-worship;" and man "fallen from grace" became an easy dupe to the delusions of Satan, at every step of the growing apostasy, till one, who by their fond credulity was supposed to be richer in grace than Christ, and more able to bestow, was exalted as the head of the church.

While, however, the doctrines of Divine influences were known and preached, there was still a directory to an invisible Guide, who was leading many in secret; and though heavy burdens were bound upon them, and they understood not their chartered liberty, yet, an inward sensibility taught them where to find rest for their souls. In their own works they could not find it, and in the midst of the darkness of superstition, they did lean on Him whom they saw but indistinctly. One blessed truth they knew, that salvation was all of grace, according to an everlasting purpose and pre-ordination of God; and therefore, if it must be "by infusion of righteousness," hard as was the labour before them, God, who according to his purpose had given them the will, would in some way or other, they concluded, work with them, that they should not fall short at last. But when Pelagianism told mankind that their own natural powers were sufficient, and must perform the task, so far as this lie was believed, all was lost; and insensibly both the demand of the Law, and the grace of the Gospel, were forgotten. The subterfuges of the fashionable superstition were all the religion that men needed, and they lived and died in delusion. Augustin, as we have often noticed, seems to have been raised up, at a particular crisis, to stem the torrent of this last delusion; and his ministry and writings were very instrumental, for many centuries, in preserving and cherishing a seed in the Catholic church, even when the abomination of desolation was already set up. It was not, however, given to Augustin and his followers, to recover all the lost treasure, and with 'full assurance of understanding,' to explain the whole of the Gospel maxim, "By grace ye are saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." The Waldenses and our Lollards followed in the same track, and were not always fully and steadily consistent in their testimony; but the author of the Comment on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, left but little of "the truth once delivered to the saints," on this point, to be recovered, explored, and adapted for use.

This, however, appeared, not to the pope alone, but, as we have seen by his summons, to the emperor and his counsellors also, to be “new and dangerous opinions,” “threatening” “to overturn the religion of their ancestors.”

When the diet assembled, it was plain, that if they could have considered Luther only as the champion of the liberties of the German churches against the exactions of Rome, he would have found many protectors; but he had gone too far to be handled as a political tool—he had attacked the foundations of that religion which held all their minds in bondage, and they were ready to fall upon him as a destroyer of their gods. The first proposal of the papal party, to treat the reformer as one already condemned by a superior authority, without further deliberation or inquiry, was strongly resisted. The emperor himself insisted that the pope’s nuncios should lay before the diet the grounds on which Luther had been condemned. Aleander, the principal of these, undertook this explanation with much art and address. He affected to shew, from the writings of the heretic, that “his principles overturned all ecclesiastical authority; that he left none to interpret Scripture in doubtful cases; that there would soon be as many religions as there were men of fancy and imagination.” “He accused him of overturning the efficacy of the sacraments, and of inculcating a notion of Christian liberty, which gave the reins to vice and wickedness.” Especially he represented “the doctrines of grace and human depravity, taught by Luther, as subverting the foundations of morality, making good and evil to depend on a fatal and inevitable necessity:” “The whole world,” he said, “would be thrown into confusion: there would be left no ties of obedience, either to princes or to God himself; because, according to this novel system, the commandments of the Supreme Being are incompatible with the powers and capacities of his creatures.” But, “notwithstanding the great evil was daily spreading itself, the Catholic party was infinitely the strongest, and none would protect the heretic against the displeasure of the emperor.”

Here we find that the papal advocate objects to the evangelical doctrines, precisely on the same grounds as the objector in St. Paul’s epistles, as the philosopher Celsus, in his writings against the primitive Christians, and Pelagius against Augustin; yet Aleander calls it “a novel opinion!” But while he affects to feel so zealous for the interests of morality, what comparison was there—the world itself being judge—between the



morals of Luther and those of Aleander, of the pope and of his cardinals? These representations, however, would have their effect on the minds of many; and Rome, on this occasion, under her alarm at the report of the great increase of Luther's followers, had had recourse to all her seductions, and had even been lavish of her MONEY<sup>1</sup>.

Luther had departed from Wittemberg to proceed to the diet, accompanied with several friends, among whom is mentioned Justus Jonas, who was afterwards celebrated in the annals of the Reformation. He preached at several towns in his progress, and accepting the entertainments of his friends, so-laced himself with music, in which he particularly delighted. This was not exactly in the style of monkish saintship, and his enemies almost objected to him that he was "a wine-bibber, and a friend of publicans and sinners." He complains, however, of much indisposition on a part of this journey. In a letter to Spalatinus, then at Worms, he writes: "All the way from Eise-nach to Frankfort, I have experienced such languor as I never felt before: besides, I hear the emperor has published a man-date to frighten me; but Christ, nevertheless, lives; and I will enter Worms, though all the gates of hell, and all the powers of darkness oppose. I mean to terrify and to despise the prince of darkness." In every city his friends testified their alarms "that bonds and imprisonment awaited him." At Oppenheim, he was met by Martin Bucer, who was sent, with several horse-men, to entreat him to take refuge in the castle of a knight in the neighbourhood. Every one thought of the violation of the faith which had been pledged to John Huss, but nothing could daunt the mind of Luther. His memorable answer to his friends discovers that he saw the contest to be "not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world." "Should I be obliged to encounter at Worms as many devils as there are tiles upon the houses, it shall not deter me from my purpose of appearing there," &c. Luther's own reflection, a little before his death, upon his conduct at this time, is said to have been—"So fearless can God render a man: I do not know whether at this day I should be so bold."

He arrived at Worms on the 16th of April, 1521; and as he stepped from his car, in the midst of a prodigious multitude of people, said aloud, "God will be on my side." Spalatinus,

<sup>1</sup> See the authorities in Milner, vol. iv. p. 531.



who was an eye-witness, declares, that no prince ever received such honours. Immense crowds daily flocked to see him; and his apartments were constantly filled with visitors of the highest rank. When he was conducted to the diet by the marshal of the empire, the crowd was so great that it was found necessary to introduce him by a private way.

After a long altercation, he was required to say, simply and clearly, Whether he would or would not retract his opinions. "My answer," said Luther instantly, "shall be direct and plain. I cannot think myself bound to believe either the pope or his councils; for it is very clear, not only that they have often erred, but often contradicted themselves; therefore, unless I am convinced by Scripture or clear reason, my belief is so confirmed by the scriptural passages I have produced, and my conscience so determined to abide by the Word of God, that I neither can nor will retract any thing; for it is neither safe nor innocent to act against a man's conscience." "Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise. May God help me! Amen<sup>1</sup>!"

On the next day, the emperor directed a schedule, written with his own hand, to be read to the princes in full congregation. The purport of the schedule was this: "His ancestors had always respected the Roman church, which Luther now opposed: he could not, with propriety, depart from their example: he was bound to defend the ancient faith, and support the papal see; and as Martin Luther could not be induced to give up any one of his errors, he was determined to proceed against him as a notorious heretic."

The elector of Saxony, who seems well to have deserved the epithet of Frederic the Wise, perceiving the danger, and his own inability to screen Luther from the attack, contrived a plan to remove him from the public view. Luther, though averse to the plan, submitted to the elector; he was seized on his return home, as if by violence, and conveyed into the castle of Wartburg. The public impression was, that he had been imprisoned, perhaps murdered, by the emissaries of Rome; so that his enemies not only missed their prey, but had to sustain all the odium of the supposed violence. It has been conjectured that the emperor himself was not unacquainted with Frederic's plan. Charles was playing the politician. The great object of his ambition was to oppose the power of Francis I., the French

<sup>1</sup> The elector of Saxony is reported to have said, "O, how excellently did Father Martin speak, both in German and Latin! He was sufficiently, if not rather too animated."—See Milner.

king; he had therefore to gratify the pope and his party, but he must not offend the Germans, from whom he asked a supply of 24,000 soldiers. The religious agitation of which Luther was the great mover, was now become an important element in the materials on which his political craft must work; but so it was, that after all Charles's victories and triumphs, by mismanagement—or rather, because the wise were taken in their own craftiness—it defeated all his schemes, and snatched from him the fruits of a long and laborious course of successful ambition.

Charles V. indeed, if it was his intention, had not leisure to enforce the execution of his cruel edict against the Reformation in its infancy. Commotions in Spain and in the Low Countries called for his presence, and for some time occupied his attention. In the absence of the emperor from Germany, the execution of the decrees was left to its native princes; hence, the Romanists tell us, the Lutherans triumphed in Saxony, and were allowed to go on in their own way in most other parts of Germany. Some of the princes and magistrates absolutely refused to execute the edict, and others took no notice of it.

The followers of Luther were much disconcerted at the mysterious disappearance of their leader; and the reformer, in the place of his concealment, which, in allusion to the place of St. John's banishment, he frequently called his "Patmos," complained bitterly of his own indolence, the consequences of his sumptuous fare, and the lazy habits he was contracting. But his enemies thought him a great deal too busily employed in his retreat; they say he laboured with indefatigable industry, published many new books, confirmed his disciples in their attachment to him, defended his old heresies, and daily invented new ones<sup>1</sup>.

The greatest of his achievements in his Patmos, was his undertaking to prepare a translation of the Scriptures into the German tongue. During his solitude in the summer of the year 1521, he not only translated all the New Testament, but took great pains to improve his knowledge of the Greek and Hebrew languages, for the purpose of rendering his intended version of the Scriptures more complete.

An opponent of a rather extraordinary kind in the field of controversy, about the same time encountered Luther. This was Henry VIII., king of England, who wrote a book on the

<sup>1</sup> Maimbourg, sect. 45. Milner.

Seven Sacraments, in answer to Luther's treatise on the Babylonish captivity. We can easily imagine how such an advocate would be flattered and caressed by the pope; but if the latter was infallible in his decisions, he was no prophet of the future. Henry was complimented with the title of "Defender of the Faith." The champion of the Reformation, as ignorant of futurity as the pope, forgot the maxim, "Treat an enemy as if he may one day become a friend;" and he lived to feel the inconvenience to the cause of the Reformation itself, of the acrimonious and abusive language into which his irritable temper was betrayed on this occasion.

Towards the close of this year, died Leo X., the Roman pontiff, who had done much to betray the true character of the papacy, under its assumed mask of sanctity. While he issued bulls against heretics, and was maintaining "the merit of works," and denouncing the doctrine of justification by faith, as destructive of all moral obligation, he himself "was dissipating his time and health in prodigal and luxurious pleasures, in the company of debauched cardinals, and in promoting expensive and licentious spectacles at the theatre." He was succeeded by Adrian, a Roman Catholic of a different stamp, who, while he stood no less opposed to the truth of the Gospel, was rigid in his morals, saw and lamented the abuses of the papal see, and would have reformed them: for reasons of state, however, he was obliged to connive at them, and sail with the stream.

Luther, who was in fact, though not in name, by merited influence, not by prescriptive right, or usurped authority, the pontiff of the reformed in Germany, found "the care of all the churches, which came upon him daily," no light burden; and circumstances occurred which induced him, contrary to the wishes of the elector, ever anxious for his safety, to burst from his retreat, and resume his station at Wittemberg<sup>1</sup>. During Luther's absence, there was found no one among his followers, who was properly qualified to direct the government of the infant society at this critical period, when they had so many artful and powerful enemies to contend with—so many spiritual conquests to achieve for the benefit of mankind—so many new regulations to devise for the establishment of peace and order among themselves. Philip Melancthon was the mild and peaceful scholar, whose gentle and fruitful mind, while it enriched, leaned for support upon the stronger stem that waved

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 1522.

its head in the tempest. Carolstad was quite willing to be the king among the trees, and thought that "a fire might proceed from the bramble, which would consume the cedars of Lebanon;" but his rashness and incapacity would soon have exposed the interests of the Gospel to be trampled beneath the feet of its enemies.

We have a trait in the character of this man, which may serve to specify some of the weeds that the garden of the Reformation has produced. "From Matt. xi. 25. he drew an inference that human learning was useless, if not injurious, to the student of the Scriptures. He frequented the shops of the lowest mechanics, and consulted them about the meaning of the Scriptures. He would be called no longer by the appellation of 'doctor,' or any other honourable title. He lived in a village, employed himself in rustic occupations, and maintained that thinking persons stood in no need of learning, but had better labour with their hands. In consequence of his example and conversation, the young academics of Wittemberg left the university, and ceased to pursue their studies; and even the schools of the boys were deserted." The elector of Saxony justly complained of this; it was enough, indeed, to have prejudiced his mind against the new ecclesiastics, whom he was cherishing by his protection, with so much danger to himself and to his dominions.

The indiscriminate zeal of Carolstad, moreover, had not been content by arguments and the exercise of legal authority, to carry on the work of reformation. "He headed a multitude of unthinking, impetuous youths, inflamed their minds by popular harangues, and led them on to actions the most extravagant and indefensible. They entered the great church of All Saints, broke to pieces the crucifixes and other images, and threw down the altars." "An alloy of pride and self-will," says Milner, "sadly debased the honest zeal of this early reformer. He even avowed to Melancthon, that he wished to be as great and as much thought of as Luther. Melancthon told him that that was the language of pride, envy, and unchristian emulation; but Carolstad was deaf to admonition. He openly professed that he had not the least regard for the authority of any human being. He said he should stick close to the simple Word of God, and that no man could be a Christian, who found fault with what he did."

Luther was bold and undaunted, and regarded no man, when he stood for the authority of Scripture; but his was

a different spirit from this displayed by Carolstad. Among the unthinking, how frequently is the latter mistaken for the former! Luther's reflections on these transactions, from his Patmos, are well worthy of remembrance. He thus writes to the elector: "There is no reason to be alarmed; rather give praise to God, and rejoice in the certain expectation that all will end well. Things of this kind always happen to those who endeavour to spread the Gospel. We must not only expect Annas and Caiaphas to rage against us; but even a Judas to appear among the apostles, and Satan himself among the sons of God. Be wise, and look deeper than to the external appearance. Other agents besides those which are merely human, are at work. Don't be afraid, but be prepared for more events of this sort. This is only the beginning of the business: Satan intends to carry matters much farther yet. Believe me in what I now say; I am but a plain, simple man; however, I know something of HIS arts. Suffer the world to clamour against us, and to pass their harsh judgments. Be not so much concerned at the falling away of particular Christians. Even holy Peter fell; and also others of the apostles. Doubt not that they will, in a short time, rise again, as surely as Christ himself rose from the dead. The words of St. Paul to the Corinthians are at this moment peculiarly applicable to our circumstances; namely, that we should 'approve ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours.'"

What Luther foresaw almost immediately came to pass. It looked, indeed, as if other agents besides those which were merely human, were at work; that the affair of Carolstad was but "the beginning of the business;" that "Satan intended to carry matters much farther yet." Several enthusiasts had appeared in Saxony, among whom Nicholas Stork, Mark Stubner, Martin Cellary, and Thomas Munzer, have by their follies, obtained a memorial in history. Stork was a baker at Zwickau, who had selected, from his acquaintance of the same calling, twelve whom he called apostles, and also seventy-two disciples. The other three, in a tumultuous manner, harangued the populace in the church of St. Catharine. Nicholas Hausman, the pious pastor of the place, resisted these insane prophets to the best of his power, but he could not control their fury. They professed themselves to have a Divine commission, and pretended to visions and inspirations. Munzer, in particular, will be found at the head of a rebellion of the peasants in 1525. Melancthon writes thus to the elector of Saxony:

“ Your highness is aware of the many dangerous dissensions which have distracted your city of Zwickau, on the subject of religion. Some persons have been cast into prison there, for their seditious innovations. Three of the ringleaders are come hither. Two of them are ignorant mechanics, the third is a man of letters. I have given them a hearing, and it is astonishing what they tell of themselves ; namely, “ that they are positively sent by God to teach ; that they have familiar conferences with God ; that they can foretell events ; and, to be brief, that they are on a footing with prophets and apostles. I cannot describe how I am moved by these lofty pretensions. I see strong reasons for not despising the men ; for it is clear to me there is in them something more than a mere human spirit ; but whether the spirit be of God or not, none, except Martin, can easily judge,” &c.

The elector and his counsellors, it appears, were alike perplexed in this matter. “ They felt the same doubt that Melancthon had expressed, and were afraid of sinning against God by condemning his choicest servants.” Melancthon pressed the elector still further to call in the assistance of Luther’s judgment. “ No person,” he says, “ could manage the business so well. Stork and his associates had raised disputes concerning the baptism of infants, and had appealed to supernatural revelations which they had had from God ;” and that “ in regard to himself, he was by no means qualified to pronounce sentence in so difficult a case.” Luther was informed of the extraordinary pretensions of these men ; and in answer to the inquiries of Melancthon, wrote : “ As you are my superior both in discernment and erudition, I cannot commend your timidity in regard to these prophets. In the first place, when they bear record of themselves, we ought not implicitly to believe them ; but rather to try the spirits, according to St. John’s advice. As yet I hear of nothing done or said by them, which exceeds the imitative powers of Satan. It is my particular wish that you should examine whether they can produce any PROOF of having a Divine commission ; for God never sent any prophet, who was not either called by proper persons, or authorized by special miracles—no, not even his own Son. Their bare assertion of a divine AFFLATUS, is not a sufficient ground for your receiving them, since God did not even choose to speak to Samuel but with the sanction of Eli’s authority. So much for their pretensions to a public character.”



Notwithstanding the danger of the times, and the elector's advice, who doubted his ability to protect him from his enemies, Luther resumed his station at Wittemberg. "During my absence," he writes to the elector, "Satan has made such inroads among my flock, and raised such commotions, that it is not in my power to suppress it by mere writing. My presence among my people is absolutely necessary; I must live with them, I must talk to them, I must hear them speak, they must see my mode of proceeding; I must guide them, and do them all the good I can. They are my children in Christ, and my conscience will not suffer me to be absent from them any longer." The presence and preaching of Luther soon restored order among his people at Wittemberg. The importance of Carolstad was at an end; he retired, and finally fixed at Basle, where he exercised the pastoral office for ten years. "I offended Carolstad," Luther writes, "because I annulled his institutions; though I by no means condemned his doctrine. In one point, however, he grieved me much. I found him taking prodigious pains about ceremonies and things external, and, at the same time, very negligent in inculcating the essential principles of Christianity — faith and charity. By his injudicious method of teaching, he had induced many of the people to think themselves Christians, howsoever deficient they were in these graces, provided they did but communicate in both kinds, take the consecrated elements into both hands, refuse private confession, and break images. Observe how the malice of Satan attempts to ruin the Gospel in a new way. All along, my object has been, by instruction to emancipate the consciences of men from the bondage of human inventions of every kind, and then the papal fooleries would soon fall of themselves, by common consent; but Carolstad suddenly set himself up as a new teacher, and by his own arbitrary institutions, endeavoured to ruin my credit with the people."

The fanatic prophets were also confronted with Luther. He heard patiently their mighty pretensions, and without entering into the serious confutation of what they said, bid them be careful what they were about. "You have mentioned nothing," he says, "that has the least support in Scripture; the whole seems rather an ebullition of imagination, or, perhaps, the fraudulent suggestions of an evil spirit." They raved and stormed exceedingly. Luther dismissed them with these words: "The God whom I serve and adore will confound your vanities."



That very day they left the town, and sent letters to Luther, full of execration and abuse. The leaders, however, being gone, their disciples dwindled in number; and, for the present, the delusion was quashed.

We may, however, justly say of this period, that "the Word of God mightily grew and prevailed." Monks left their monasteries, and became active instruments in propagating the Gospel. At the same time, Luther had to lament that many renounced their vows of celibacy, and flocked to Wittemberg upon any thing but a religious principle, to the great scandal of the Reformation. He complains that "wickedness still abounded among those who professed to abhor the papacy, and that they had the kingdom of God among them too much in word, instead of power." Amid these labours and cares, the situation of Luther was most distressing. "I am compassed with no guards but those of heaven; I live in the midst of enemies, who have legal power to kill me every hour. This is the way in which I comfort myself; I know that Christ is Lord of all, that the Father has put all things under his feet; among the rest, the wrath of the emperor, and all evil spirits. If it please Christ that I should be slain, let me die in his name: if it do not please him, who shall slay me?" "Because we hold the Gospel in word only, and not in power, and are more elated in knowledge than edified in charity, I fear our Germany will be drenched in blood."

The imperial government at Nuremberg had lately issued an edict against Luther's principles, and, in consequence, duke George, who had been present, and instrumental in obtaining the edict, and in making it as severe as possible, was beginning to persecute with the greatest cruelty, all persons in his dominions, who adhered to Lutheranism. He was incessant in his endeavours to withdraw the elector and his brother from their protection of Luther. The reformer's personal apprehensions from duke George, were not, however, very intimidating; he proceeded with his great work, and published this year, with the assistance of his friends, particularly Justus Jonas and Melancthon, his German translation of the SCRIPTURES, which was felt, by the advocates of the papacy, as a vital blow.

The papal historian<sup>1</sup> confesses, that "Luther's translation was remarkably elegant, and, in general, so much approved, that it was read by almost every body throughout Germany.

<sup>1</sup> Maimbourg.

Women of the first distinction studied it with the most industrious and persevering attention, and obstinately defended the tenets of the reformer, against bishops, monks, and catholic doctors." The papists thought the only antidote was, to publish a translation of their own, more favourable to the tenets of the Roman church; but, with all the alteration they could make, they were hardly satisfied. Emser, a Leipsic doctor, who was employed in this translation, says, "He had confuted Luther's interpretations of the Scriptures, and opposed to them his own; constantly following that sense of any passage, which the church approved. That, however, he was by no means convinced of the expediency of trusting the Scriptures with the ignorant multitude: the sacred writings were an abyss in whose depths even the most learned men had often been lost." "If the laity," said he, "would take my advice, I would recommend it to them rather to aim at a holy life, than to study the Scriptures. The Scriptures are committed to the learned, and to them only."

The alterations and regulations which the reformers had introduced at Wittemberg, with the consent of the people, and by the connivance of the elector, served as a model for some of the principal towns in Saxony. Luther thus describes the progress of its principles. "Hitherto, by books and by preaching, I have laboured among the people to inform their minds, and draw their hearts from false dependencies; thinking it a Christian employment, if possible, to *break without hands* the abomination which Satan, by "the man of sin," had set up in the holy place. I have attempted nothing forcibly, nothing imperiously; nor have I changed old customs, being always afraid of doing mischief; partly on account of those who are weak in the faith, and not suddenly to be divested of old prejudices or induced to acquiesce in new modes of worship; but, principally, because of those light and fastidious spirits, who rush on without faith and without understanding, and delight in novelty only, and are presently disgusted when the charms of novelty have ceased. In other subjects, persons of this turn of mind are sufficiently troublesome; in religion, however, they are particularly so; but as I now flatter myself that the hearts of many are both enlightened and strengthened by the grace of God; and as circumstances require that scandals should at length be removed out of the kingdom of Christ, we ought to attempt something in his name; for it is highly proper that we should consult for the good of the few, lest,

while we perpetually dread the levity and abuses of the many we should do good to none ; and lest, while we dread the future scandals, we should confirm the general abominations," &c.

Duke George was, indeed, the most active and cruel of the persecutors of the reformers ; but Henry, duke of Brunswick, and Ferdinand, archduke of Austria, brother to the emperor, trod in his steps. The latter issued a severe edict, to prevent the publication of Luther's Bible, which had soon gone through several editions : he forbade all the subjects of his imperial majesty to have any copies either of that or of any of Luther's works.

Meanwhile, Luther's hostility against the papacy, now that he was convinced of its true character, knew no bounds nor moderation ; and especially when he saw it " drunken with the blood of the saints." Notwithstanding the dreadful struggles which he foresaw, he seems to have expected the fulfilment of the prophecy to be near at hand, when all the fabric of papal dominion, though supported by kings and rulers, was to fall " without hands," — as he conceived, by the progress of that preached Gospel, then beginning so powerfully to impress the public mind. He says, in a letter to the elector of Saxony : " It is only lately that I have begun to see — what however I might have seen long ago, because every line of sacred history clearly shews it, — namely, that whether the thing be done with a good or a bad grace, not only ecclesiastical and spiritual dominion, but also civil and political constitutions, must in the end give way to the Gospel of Christ."

These were, indeed, erroneous views of prophecy ; and by their perverted application, were likely to be, and, in fact, have been the occasion of much mischief. It is, however, hardly understood at this present day, that " the stone without hands," which is " to dash to pieces the whole fabric of human power," is, in the page of prophecy, a symbol of a very different dispensation from that of the Gospel, which calls to repentance and faith in Christ, and which commands — " avenge not yourselves."

He who, with his triumphant followers, is to "rule the nations with a rod of iron, and break them in pieces like a potter's vessel," has not yet appeared in the " clouds of heaven." He raises up indeed, from time to time, in the midst of a rebellious world, that " will not have this man to reign over them," witnesses of his truth, and sends them forth " as sheep in the midst of wolves," to bear a faithful testimony, but not to oppose with violence, or crush with power ; to accept in meekness " their little help," or to fall, by persecution, martyrs in the good cause. Luther and

his followers were witnesses of this kind ; nor did the great reformer, in his general conduct, mistake his character. “ Had it been right to have aimed at reform by violence and tumults,” he observes, “ it would have been easy for me to have deluged Germany with blood ; nay, had I been in the least inclined to promote sedition, it was in my power, when I was at Worms, to have endangered the safety even of the emperor himself. The devil smiles in secret when men pretend to support religion by seditious tumults ; he is cut to the heart when he sees them in faith and patience rely on the written Word.”

But the mistakes of some subsequent reformers, on this matter, and the mixture of the character of a preacher of the Gospel, with that of the political innovator, have, in many instances, perverted the blessings of the Reformation, and paved the way for its extinction or corruption.

In many parts of Germany, and in the north of Europe, the doctrines of the Reformation were now making great progress, in defiance of all opposition and persecution. The papal historians acknowledge, with grief, that Lutheranism had sadly increased in the latter part of 1522, and the beginning of 1523 ; and that the rapid ascendant which it had gained, appeared but too plain at the diet of Nuremberg, where Germany presented to the pope her “ Hundred Grievances.” At the same time, the reformed religion was publicly taught in Alsace and Switzerland ; where, about this time, were labouring Casper Hedio, Martin Bucer, and John Œcolampadius, names famous in the history of the Reformation.

The sagacious mind of Frederic, however, foresaw, at this period, a combination between the pope and the emperor, with the more bigoted of the German princes, to arrest by force the spreading interest of religion. But the danger was not so immediate as the elector apprehended ; which was owing, principally, to the occupation of the emperor in more distant scenes. His successful ambition was, however, rendering him still more and more formidable as an enemy to the Reformation. The good cause, notwithstanding the local persecutions it endured from many of the princes of the empire, was, at the same time, making great progress not only in Germany, but in Denmark and Sweden, the sovereigns of which countries, Christian II. and Gustavus Vasa appeared, but from very different motives, as protectors of the Reformation. Considerable impression was made on Hungary, although Lewis, its king, was a bitter enemy. The reformers found a wise and powerful protector in George, marquis

of Brandenburg ; and under his auspices, and those of the dukes of Lignitz and Munsterberg, a considerable reformation took place in the churches of Silesia, and particularly at Breslaw. John Thurzo, bishop of that city, is celebrated as the first of the Roman catholic bishops who laboured for the revival of true religion. He died early, but his successor, James of Saltza, trod in his steps. In Misnia and Thuringia, the reformers suffered from persecution, under George of Saxony, who still laboured to extirpate the truth by imprisonment, fines, banishment, and at length by capital punishments. The duke of Bavaria and the bishop of Treves proscribed and put many to death ; and Ferdinand of Austria, the emperor's brother, still continued to be very bitter in his enmity against religion. But the most violent persecution raged in Flanders, where the emperor was exhibiting in person a cruel specimen of the assistance which he was ready to lend to the cause of Rome, as soon as circumstances should admit.

Towards the close of the year 1523, died Pope Adrian ; he was succeeded by Julius de Medicis, who took the name of Clement VII. This pontiff being well versed in the crooked arts of papal government, called to his assistance the artful Campeggio, and sent him into Germany, to counteract by his skilful negotiations, the interests of the fast-spreading Reformation.

About the same time, the landgrave of Hesse decided for that cause. Enlightened by Luther's writings, he enjoined his preachers, in a public proclamation, to confine themselves to the clear simple doctrine of our Saviour and his apostles. Albert, marquis of Brandenburg, brother of the marquis before mentioned, espoused the sentiments of Luther. Lutheran divines laboured in Prussia with great success ; and George de Polentz, bishop of Samland, so much distinguished himself by his evangelical exertions, that he may be truly called the father of the Reformation in that country. " At length," says Luther, one bishop is come forward, and with a single eye has given himself up to the cause of Christ and his Gospel in Prussia." " The kingdom of Satan declines fast in that country." Evangelical doctrine triumphed also in Westphalia, in the duchy of Mecklenburg, in Pomerania and Livonia, at Magdeburg and Bremen, and especially at Strasburg ; and even in Brunswick and Leipsic, notwithstanding the hostility of their sovereigns, it gained ground.

Many, however, fell in the conflict between light and darkness. In places where the enmity of the rulers, whether ecclesi-

astical or civil, was overawed by numbers of converts to the new system, the sufferings of the reformers were light, compared with what took place where the friends of the Reformation were few and had little authority ; or where they were exposed to the merciless rage, either of a blind prejudiced populace, or of domineering bishops and bigoted magistrates. Luther thus writes, on occasion of the martyrdom of Henry of Zutphen, prior of the Augustine friars at Antwerp : “ Such is the energy of the Divine Spirit, that there are now almost every where a numerous communion of holy men, both preachers and hearers. It is true, some of them are killed, others imprisoned, or driven into banishment ; and, to be short, all are afflicted and suffer disgrace for the cause of Christ. But what is this but a revival of the true Christian life, of which the dreadful persecutions and sufferings appear to the world intolerable ? Nevertheless, according to the Psalmist, ‘ the blood of his saints is dear in the sight of the Lord.’ — Without doubt, Henry of Zutphen, lately murdered by the Ditmarsians, was eminently one of these. He has freely sealed with his blood his testimony to the Christian truth. Before him, John Voes and Henry Esch obtained the crown of martyrdom, at Brussels. Henry of Zutphen is a third beautiful and bright example. I may add to the catalogue Casper Tauber, who was lately burnt at Vienna, and a bookseller named George, whom the Hungarians put to death ; and lastly, I am informed that at Prague, in Bohemia, a person has been deprived of life, for no other fault than having forsaken the licentious pretensions to celibacy, and contracted a truly honourable Christian marriage. These and similar instances are the sacrifices which, in a short time, will extinguish with their blood every remaining spark of the papacy.” “ All the accounts agree that, in the years 1523 and 1524, the persecutions were excessively severe<sup>1</sup>.” In Bavaria, Luther informs us, that, though the good seed could scarcely be said to be yet sown, the cross and persecution of the Word prevailed : “ The wild beasts rage, but the blood which they shed will soon stifle their fury.”

A careful examination of the sharp contest between Luther and Carolstadt respecting the Eucharist, may be seen in Milner. By some writers this controversy has been unjustly represented much more to the prejudice of the great reformer. One evil effect, however, it had upon him ; it riveted still more firmly in his mind an error which has served to give a specific character

<sup>1</sup> Milner.



to Luther and his followers, in distinction from other reformed churches. Luther's own account of the contest will be sufficient for this short narrative. "I neither can nor will deny, that if Carolstadt or any one else could have persuaded me, during the last five years, that in the sacrament there was nothing but mere bread and wine, he would have conferred on me a great obligation. I have examined this matter with the utmost anxiety, and with persevering diligence; I have stretched every nerve, with a view to unravel the mystery; for I most clearly saw that the new tenet would give me a great advantage in my contests with the papacy. Moreover, I have had a correspondence on this subject with two persons much more acute than Carolstadt, and not at all disposed to twist words from their natural meaning. But the text in the Gospel is so strong and unequivocal, that I have found myself compelled to submit to its decision. Its force can be eluded in no way whatever, much less by the fictitious glosses of a giddy brain. Nay, after all, at this very time, if any could prove to me, by good scriptural testimony, that there is only bread and wine in the sacrament, he would have no occasion to attack me with any degree of bitterness or animosity. Alas! if I know myself, I am sufficiently inclined by nature to take that side."

We perceive where Luther's mind was checked in unravelling, as he speaks, "this mystery." The plain and literal words of Christ are: "This is my body" — "This is my blood." Zuinglius, who agreed with Carolstadt, understood by these words, "This is a symbol and memorial of my body, and of my blood." But this appeared to Luther to be "an elusion of the plain force of the terms," — "a presumptuous cutting asunder of the knot, instead of unravelling the mystery." At the same time he renounced the papal error of transubstantiation — that the bread and wine after consecration remained no longer, but were transmitted into the material body and blood of Christ. The bread and wine, he allowed, remained; but he "saw not how the words of our blessed Saviour could stand inviolate, unless he maintained that together with the real bread and wine there was also the material substance of Christ's human body." This doctrine, accordingly, Luther and his adherents held, which gave rise to the term CONSUBSTANTIATION. The elusive interpretation of Zuinglius, advocated by the fiery zeal of Carolstadt, was not likely to remove, in the mind of Luther, his erroneous conclusion on this matter. But subsequent Protestant teachers have been more successful — if not in unravelling the mystery how the



wonderful communion of the body and blood of Christ is accomplished from him who is become a quickening Spirit — yet in shewing “the Spirit and the life” of our Saviour’s words; so that “the body and blood of Christ are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord’s supper,” without the necessity of any miraculous change whatever with respect to the outward sign or memorial.

Thus, however, an unhappy division was made among the reformers. Luther’s mind was shut up to any farther improvement in this doctrine; and Martin Bucer, who saw more clearly into the meaning of the Scripture, and taught what the churches of Geneva and England afterwards held concerning the Eucharist, laboured in vain to reconcile the contending parties.

The excesses of the Anabaptists — the celestial prophets, as they were called — Munzer and his partisans — at this time greatly prejudiced the cause of the Reformation. Carolstadt gave them but too much countenance and encouragement. The bold pretensions of these enthusiasts to extraordinary revelations had, at first, as we have seen, perplexed and almost confounded not only the elector and his ministers, but Melancthon and the whole university of Wittemberg: only Luther could penetrate into their true character. But that character was now becoming more manifest. They boasted of having conversations with the Almighty, and inveighed both against Luther and the pope. “Luther’s doctrine,” Munzer said, “was not sufficiently spiritual; it was, indeed, altogether carnal.” “Divines should exert their utmost endeavours to acquire a spirit of prophecy; otherwise, their knowledge of divinity would not be worth a halfpenny.” “If men would be saved, they must fast, look grave, talk little, and wear plain clothes.” “They should leave the crowd, and think continually of God, and demand a sign from him, by which they may know certainly that he has a regard for them, and that Christ died for them. If the sign does not appear at the moment, they should be instant in prayer, and even expostulate with God as though he did not keep his promises.” “An angry expostulation of this sort demonstrated the fervour of the soul, and was highly pleasing to God. Dreams,” he maintained, “were employed by God to reveal his will and answer prayer,” and were frequently the subject of his discourses. The fanatic spirit at length led them to that excess, that a number of the inhabitants of Alsted, where he resided, bound themselves to Munzer with an oath, to murder all wicked persons, appoint new princes and magistrates, and organise the world afresh, upon

such a plan, that pious and good people only should have the upper hand. Munzer declared, that for all this he had the positive command of God.

Banished from the electorate, and unable to form a party at Nuremberg, he proceeded to Mulhausen, where he became the minister of the common people, and stimulated them to degrade the old magistrates and elect new ones; to turn the monks out of doors, and seize their houses and property. The very best and richest house fell to the share of Munzer himself, who was now become the first ecclesiastic and chief magistrate of the place. He decided all points in a summary way by the Bible, or by inspiration, and taught the doctrine of perfect equality, and of a community of goods. The poor ceased to labour, and supplied their wants from the rich by force. The number of the deluded rabble increased in a most astonishing manner; their infatuated leader became every day more insolent, and persuaded himself that the time for putting his grand design into execution was fast advancing.

The reflections of Luther upon these disgraceful scenes, as given in a letter to the elector, are of very general importance, in application to what may, in some measure, be expected to take place on every revival of religion. "It is Satan's method to attempt to crush every revival of the Divine Word, first by force, and, if that does not succeed, then by false spirits, by artful and mischievous teachers. It was so in the first ages of the propagation of the Gospel; he deluged Christendom with the blood of martyrs. But this did not answer his purpose; he therefore sent forth a tribe of false prophets, and filled every corner of the world with heresies, till at length the papacy, the most powerful of all the Antichrists, fully completed his designs. It is so at this time. The pope, the emperor, kings and princes, and wicked bishops, like madmen, rage against the Gospel, and do their utmost to oppress it. Satan, however, is sufficiently acute to see that they will not prevail, but will bring down the Divine wrath upon themselves; and in the meantime he produces lying spirits and abandoned sectaries to do his business." "They openly boast that they have neither learnt nor received any thing from us, but have been conversing with God for the space of three years. They think little of our teaching faith, charity, and the cross, at Wittemberg. 'You must hear,' they say, 'the Voice of God itself.' And if the Scripture be appealed to, they instantly cry, Babel, Babel, Babel!" "These miserable men have such a degree of pride and positiveness as I never

heard or read of in my life.” “ They say that they are moved by the Spirit ; but I must observe, that it is the mark of a very bad spirit, when it exerts itself *only* in pulling down temples and monasteries, and burning images. The greatest villains can do such things as these.” “ These insane wretches as yet have performed no miracle in attestation of their commission, except that of collecting mobs, despising the magistrates ordained by Divine authority, throwing down statues, and requiring an implicit belief that they are the people of God<sup>1</sup>. ”

The Rustic War, or the war of the peasants, as it was called, soon burst forth. In the former part of 1525, a prodigious multitude, composed chiefly of furious and enthusiastic peasants and vassals, arose suddenly in different parts of Germany, who took arms against their lawful governors, and were guilty of the most horrid and barbarous actions. That the papists and the advocates for the old regimen would lay the blame of this rebellion on Luther and his doctrines, and say how exactly their predictions were verified respecting the consequences of the Christian liberty which he taught, we were prepared to expect. They exclaimed, “ This is the fruit of the new doctrines ! this is the fruit of Luther’s Gospel ! ” Except, however, as good, by its liability to perversion, is the occasion of evil, and that a spirit of inquiry once awakened, may be exercised on new objects totally distinct from the reformer’s purposes, — the reformation of Luther was by no means the cause of these horrid excèses. But for the religious agitation in Germany, the peasants might, perhaps, have borne their grievances some time longer ; yet the materials of this combustion had long been collecting, in the oppressed condition of the common people, which the growing intelligence of the peasants and vassals, in the usual march of society, was not likely much longer to brook. At the same time, the infatuated rulers, both in church and state, became more and more oppressive and injurious, and managed, in the selfish spirit of private monopolists, the authority with which they were entrusted for the benefit of mankind ; ignorantly supposing that they could stop the growth of nature itself in the body politic, by making

<sup>1</sup> There are many reasons to conclude that these Anabaptists had a separate origin from the preaching of Luther and his followers, and that they were, in fact, derived from some of those sectaries of the Manichean or Gnostic sects, which before the Reformation were spread over many parts of Europe, and were sometimes confounded with the Waldenses. In corroboration of this, see Dr. M’Crie’s *Life of Knox*, vol. i. p. 211.

society, now in an advanced state, still wear the bands fitted only to its childhood.

That the spirit of the false prophets should take advantage of this state of things, and apply the inflaming spark, was to be expected ; and if for no other cause, at least to discredit the pure Gospel, and represent its teachers as the ringleaders of sedition and rebellion, and thus afford a pretence for the persecution of governments. But the fact is, the genuine spirit of the Gospel of Jesus Christ does not readily coalesce with that of the political reformer, even when goaded to resist real grievances. The Divine precept and example of Christ on this head are so plain and positive, that the revolutionary politician complains of Scriptural Christianity, as engendering a mean, submissive, non-resisting spirit, which encourages the tyrant to trample upon the rights and liberties of the people. As to *his* object, and the means which *he* purposes to adopt in order to procure it, his complaint may, perhaps, seem to him to be just ; but Christians have been taught to believe in a special Providence, ruling among the kings of the earth ; and that, if under the oppressor's hand they are " counted as sheep for the slaughter," they do not, in the character which they exhibit, more than accomplish their Master's wish.

Luther had an opportunity, on this occasion, of exhibiting the true character of a witness of Jesus Christ. His address to the insurgent population, his bold remonstrance with the rulers, and his loyal concurrence for the support of the established authorities when the crisis arrived, afford a model for the imitation of all Christian ministers in all ages, and shew a character equally removed from the seditious demagogue, and the obsequious and interested flatterer of the great<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> To the people he addresses himself thus : " Let every one beware of sedition, as a very heinous crime ; and this, not only in what relates to external actions, but even to words and secret thoughts. I might augur well of your professing yourselves ready to yield to the precepts of Scripture, but that I observe your boasts of a regard for pure evangelical faith and practice are absolutely without foundation. Not one of your propositions has the least relation to any part of the Gospel ; they all tend to promote a merely secular freedom : whereas, the Gospel does not treat of these subjects, but describes our passage through this world as attended with afflictions, and as calling for patience, contempt of riches, and even of life itself. What then have *you* to do with the Gospel, except that ye use it as a pretext to cover your unchristian purposes ? " These rioters had stated to Luther, whose countenance they exceedingly desired, that their primary demand was — the entire privilege of choosing or removing their ministers, in order that they might have the pure Gospel preached to them without human mixtures and

The civil war soon became bloody and destructive. In Suabia, Franconia, and Alsace, the fanatical insurgents pulled

traditions. Luther answered to this: "I allow that those rulers who oppress their subjects in various ways, and particularly in excluding the preaching of the Gospel from among them, are without excuse; nevertheless, it is at the peril of the loss of both your souls and bodies, if you do not preserve a good conscience in this matter. Satan at this time has raised up a number of seditious, sanguinary teachers; therefore I entreat you not to believe every thing you hear. Ye call yourselves Christians, and profess to be obedient to the laws of God. In the first place, it is extremely improbable that true Christians should be so numerous as to furnish such large bodies of men as ye pretend to have on your side. A true Christian is a scarce bird in the world. I would that the major part of men were but sober and honest moralists! Secondly, Take care, and do not abuse the name of God." "Your actions make it very plain to me, that your profession of obedience to the law of God is a pretence.—St. Paul orders all men, without exception, to obey the magistrate; whereas, you would snatch the sword from him, and resist the power which is ordained of God. Moreover, the duty of the Christian in general is to suffer, to bear the cross, and not to revenge or have recourse to arms. What appearance is there of this humble spirit in your conduct? Our Lord forbade Peter to resist; and, when nailed to the cross, he patiently committed his cause to God the Father, and prayed for his murderers. Do you imitate his example, or pretend not to the character of a Christian. You intend to carry your points by force of arms, but you will not succeed." "In regard to your first requisition, the privilege of choosing your ministers, it is utterly inadmissible in all cases where the right of patronage belongs to your governors." "I admit that magistrates do many unreasonable and many wicked things. Some of *your* requisitions, also, are extremely unreasonable and unscriptural; but were they in all respects perfectly unexceptionable, yet this wicked endeavour to extort them by force of arms will, I tell you, if persevered in, bring down upon you the heavy wrath of God, both in this world and in the world to come." "The Divine rule is express: you must never go beyond *petition* and representation; and if you are persecuted, you must flee from one place to another." To the princes and nobility a language as firm and faithful is held. "It is to you, rulers, and you only, especially the rulers of the church, that the present disturbances are to be ascribed. The bishops, to this very moment, even against their better knowledge, persecute the Gospel; and the civil magistrates think of nothing but draining the wretched poor, to satisfy their own pride and luxury." "These false prophets, and this rebellion of the common people, are proofs of the Divine displeasure. To be plain, such is the state of things, that men neither can nor will, nor indeed should they, bear your government any longer. Listen to the Scriptures and amend your ways. The insurgents may not succeed at present, and you may kill the greater part of them; but God will raise up others after them." "It is very true that the demands of the malcontents originate in interested motives; nevertheless, some of them are so reasonable, that you ought to be ashamed of having reduced your subjects to the necessity of making them." Their first requisition "is so far just in its principles, that no ruler has a right to withhold the Gospel from his subjects; and, though I grant that in the application of this principle they manifest a selfish spirit, and set up claims which, under the pretence of liberality, would annihilate the power of their masters, yet their iniquitous demands *will not justify you in refusing them substantial justice.*"

down monasteries, castles, and houses, murdered the nobles and dignitaries, and were guilty of multiplied acts of treason and barbarity. Luther now considerably altered his language, for at first he had pitied the peasants. He wrote a short tract against the robbers and murderers, and exhorted all ranks and orders to come forward and help, "as they would to extinguish a general conflagration." "Whosoever should fall in opposing them and defending their lawful rulers, ought to be esteemed as martyrs in an excellent cause."

The German princes were compelled to unite their forces to suppress these insurgents. The carnage in many parts was dreadful. A vast multitude were defeated by the Saxon princes and their confederates, in a pitched battle, near Mulhausen. Munzer, their ringleader, was taken and put to death. This war is supposed to have cost Germany the lives of more than fifty thousand men. The papists laid it all to Lutheranism, but the fact was, that the greatest tragedies were exhibited in the POPISH parts of Germany. "It well deserves notice, that the tumults were the greatest in those districts where the free course of the Gospel had been most completely obstructed." The good elector adverted to this circumstance, in a memorable letter written to his brother and successor on the very day before he died. "The princes," he says, "have applied to us for our assistance against the peasants, and I could wish to open my mind to them, but I am too ill. Perhaps the principal cause of these commotions is, that those poor creatures have not been allowed to have the Word of God preached freely among them."

The elector Frederick died on the 5th of May, 1525. About the time of his death, he is said to have formed plans for the more open support and establishment of the reformed religion in Saxony, and had sent for Luther, whom, from prudential motives, he had not seen for the last twenty years, to confer with him on the subject. His brother and successor, John, fully carried these plans into execution. "Our two princes, the elector and his son," Luther writes, "support the Gospel openly." "The poor peasants are cut to pieces in every quarter. It is reported, that the duke George is so elated with his successes against them, that he intends to demand my person to be given up, conceiving me of the same stamp with Munzer."

About the same time, Luther, to the great scandal of his papal adversaries, and rather to the displeasure of his friends, though they had long since renounced the vows of celibacy as



unscriptural, entered into the marriage state with Catharine Bore, of a noble family, who had herself been a nun. With this lady he lived twenty years in the greatest harmony.

Erasmus, who had been of so great use to the Reformation in its early stages, by his revival of classical literature, and by his satirical attacks on the monks, was now induced, by the flatteries, presents, and promises of the pontiff, and of a numerous list of princes and bishops, to appear as the champion of the Roman faith, against Luther. Cardinal Wolsey, for it was the period of his greatness in England, and Henry VIII., who had granted a pension to Erasmus, were particularly urgent with him to attack the heresiarch. Tonstall, bishop of London, "conjures him" "to drive back into his den, by the sword of the Spirit, this Cerberus, who by his dismal barking so insults all the ecclesiastical orders." In prosecution of this design, Erasmus produced, in the autumn of 1524, a treatise "on the Freedom of the Will," called *Diatrobe*, having first sent a part of the manuscript to the king of England for his approbation. This great scholar knew well where the controversy between the reformers and the Romanists hinged. The papacy, and all imitative superstitions, can only exist in the character of taskmasters, portioning out the works which must be done in order to salvation. The small degree of light which remained in the Catholic church respecting the doctrines of human depravity and Divine grace, had always been hostile to the growth of popery, and in the hearts of many it had in the darkest ages, in some measure neutralised its effects. The full assertion of these doctrines by the reformers, was felt to be the laying of the axe to the root of the tree. The design of "the *Diatrobe*" was to shew, that the condition of man, since the fall of Adam, was not such, as that of his own natural strength and good works he had *no* power to turn to faith and calling upon God.

This produced on the part of Luther, his celebrated treatise "on the Bondage of the Will." It appeared towards the end of the year 1525. The work was received with great avidity; the booksellers of Wittemberg, Augsburg, and Nuremberg, strove who could produce their numerous editions the fastest; and thus we perceive what the art of printing was beginning to do for the instruction of mankind. He who would know what the genuine doctrines of the Reformation are, will do well to study Luther's work "on the Bondage of the Will." Himself declared at a late period of his life, "that he could not review any one of his writings with complete satisfaction, unless, perhaps,



his 'Catechism' and his 'Bondage of the Will.' " Luther thus addresses Erasmus : " I most exceedingly commend you, forasmuch as you are the only one who, among all my adversaries in this religious cause, has attempted to handle the real matter in dispute ; nor have you fatigued me with extraneous matter about the papacy, purgatory, indulgences, and such like trifles, about which I have hitherto been hunted on all sides to no purpose. You, and only you, have seen the true hinge upon which all turned, and have aimed your blow at the throat : on this account I most sincerely thank you<sup>1</sup>." " In my opinion," says Luther, respecting this controversy, " my opponents are at the bottom worse than Pelagians. The Pelagians speak plainly and openly : they call a thorn, a thorn ; and a fig, a fig ; they ingenuously assert a real worthiness in their merits—they purchase the

<sup>1</sup> The extracts to shew the sentiments of Luther, must, in such a history as the present, be very short. " A Christian should know that nothing is contingent in the mind of the Supreme Being, who foresees and orders all events according to His own eternal, unchangeable will.—This is a thunderbolt to the notion of Free Will. For hence, all events, though to our minds contingent, are necessary and unchangeable as they respect the Divine Will. The Divine Will cannot be deceived or disappointed. Contingency implies a changeable will, such as in God does not exist. Nevertheless, I wish we had a better word than NECESSITY, which is commonly made use of in this dispute ; for it conveys to the understanding an idea of restraint, which is totally contrary to the act of choosing. In fact there is no restraint, either on the Divine or the human will ; in both cases, the will does what it does, whether good or bad, simply, and as at perfect liberty, in the exercise of its own faculty. This unchangeableness and infallibility of God is the ground of all our hope and confidence." " So long as the operative grace of God is absent from us, every thing we do has in it a mixture of evil ; and therefore, of necessity, our works avail not to salvation. Here I do not mean a necessity of compulsion, but a necessity as to the certainty of the event. A man who has not the Spirit of God, does evil willingly and spontaneously. He is not violently impelled *against* his will, as a thief is to the gallows. But the man cannot alter his disposition to evil ; nay, even though he may be externally restrained from doing evil, he is averse to the restraint, and his inclination remains still the same. Again, when the Holy Spirit is pleased to change the will of a bad man, the new man still acts voluntarily : he is not compelled by the Spirit to determine contrary to his will, but his will itself is changed ; and he cannot now do otherwise than love the good, as before he loved the evil." " The system of Erasmus proceeds upon the principle of allowing some little to the powers of fallen man ; and I believe his intention to be good, as he thereby hopes to remove some difficulties and inconveniencies, and to reconcile certain apparently contradictory passages in Scripture. But the system entirely fails in its object ; for, unless you ascribe a perfect and complete ability to the human will, as the Pelagians do, the appearance of several contradictions in Scripture, and also all the difficulties which are raised respecting reward and merit, and the mercy and justice of God, remain in full force," &c.

favour of God : whereas, those with whom I have to do, imagine that the favour of God is to be bought at a very small price ; namely, the meritorious use of that extremely small degree of liberty which has escaped the wreck of our original depravity ; but how does St. Paul in one word confound in one mass all the assertors of every species and of every degree of merit ! ‘ All are justified freely, and without the works of the law.’ He who affirms the justification of all men who are justified to be perfectly free and gratuitous, leaves no place for works, merits, or preparations of any kind ; no place for works, either of condignity or of congruity : and thus, at one blow he demolishes both the Pelagians with their complete merits, and our sophists with their petty performances.”

Erasmus published a rejoinder, in two parts, under the title of *Hyperaspistes* ; but he did not come off with honour, in the estimation either of the learned or of his own friends<sup>1</sup>. This great and elegant scholar has indeed left strong suspicions both of his scepticism and his insincerity. Certainly he meant to appear a good papist. “ What weight the authority of the church may have with others,” he says, “ I know not ; but with me it weighs so much, that I could be of the same opinion with the Arians and Pelagians, if the church had supported their doctrines. It is not that the words of Christ are not to me sufficient ; but no one should be surprised if I follow the interpretation of the church upon whose authority my belief of the canonical Scriptures is founded. Others, perhaps, may have more genius and courage than I have ; but there is nothing in which I acquiesce more securely, than in the decisive judgment of the church. Of reasonings and arguments there is no end<sup>2</sup>.”

But motives still more mean discover themselves in Erasmus, and may well dismiss his name from the history of the church of Christ. One of the reformers, Œcolampadius, having named him, in a recent publication, as “ our great Erasmus,” the latter “ tells him in a letter, plainly, that he would rather have been ill-treated by him, than brought forward in this way as a friend of his party.”

His letter begins thus : “ I pretend not to pass sentence on you ; I leave that to the Lord, to whom you must stand or fall. But this I reflect upon, namely, What do several great men think of you ? — the emperor, the pope, Ferdinand, the king of England, the bishop of Rochester (Fisher), Cardinal Wolsey, and

<sup>1</sup> Jortin, p. 335. Beausobre, vol. v. p. 132.

<sup>2</sup> In a letter to a counsellor of Charles V.

many others, whose authority it is not safe for me to condemn, neither is it prudent to despise their favour. You know very well that there are some who look upon you reformers as heresiarchs and schismatics: now, what will such persons say, in reading in your preface the words ‘our great Erasmus?’ Will not the consequence be, that the dangerous suspicions of powerful princes, or implacable enemies, who had begun to think a little better of me since the publication of my *Diatriba*, will be all revived<sup>1</sup>.”

Luther had been prevailed upon, in order to promote the interests of the Reformation, to make some conciliatory concessions to two of his exalted adversaries whom he had most offended by the asperity of his opposition, Henry VIII. of England, and duke George of Saxony. His concessions were to no purpose, for the reformer received a severe rebuff from both these princes. Henry told him “he had blasphemed the saints, treated the apostles with contempt, and despised the holy mother of Christ.” He reviled *him* for having made, “at the instigation of the devil, a sacrilegious and incestuous marriage,” &c. He praised Wolsey for his “constant care in guarding the country from the contagion of the Lutheran heresy.” The answer of duke George was in the same strain. “The devil, on account of all this mischief, might be a friend to Luther; but the duke could not be so. For surely he who was sorry if any one of his very lowest rustics should lose even a cow, ought to be much more sorry, as being the servant of Christ, when he was robbed both of the souls and bodies of his own subjects!”

Seeing the ill effects of these attempts, through the perverse comments of his opponents, Luther made these noble declarations: “In all matters where the ministry of the Word of God was not concerned, he would not only submit to his superior, but was ready to beg pardon even of children. As a private man, he merited nothing but eternal destruction at the Divine tribunal, But, in regard to the ministry for which he considered himself

<sup>1</sup> Jortin, vol. i. p. 369. — Jortin, the biographer of Erasmus, and who coincided with him in opinion, allows that “Luther’s sentiments were at the bottom the same with those of Augustin; but that Erasmus was unacquainted with that circumstance, and imagined that he was only disputing against Luther, while in reality he was as much opposing Thomas Aquinas and his followers as the reformers of Wittemberg.” Jortin’s account of Luther is worthy to be transcribed. His “favourite doctrine was justification by faith; and not by works moral, legal, or evangelical: but, to do him justice, he perpetually inculcated the absolute necessity of good works. According to him, a man is justified only by faith; but he cannot be justified without works; and where works are not to be found, there is assuredly no true faith.”

as having a commission from Heaven, there was so much dignity in it, that no man, especially a tyrant, should ever find him give way, submit, or flatter." "In spite of kings and princes, in spite of the whole world, and of Satan himself, I will never, with God's help, desert my station."

In the mean time, Luther found the new elector, John, with his son John Frederic, ready to espouse the cause of the Reformation more openly, and to demolish every part of the Romish superstition in his dominions. He carried into execution the advice which Luther had given him. "In a general visitation of the country, let there be taken an accurate account of all the ancient revenues, and if these be found insufficient for the purpose"—of making a provision for the poor labouring clergy, "then let suitable payments be made from new imposts on the respective towns and parishes, which they may well bear, being now relieved from many popish oppressions." For the augmentation of the academical salaries, he observed to the elector, "There is an abundance of means from the many vacant offices; for the number of the clergy in the collegiate church of All Saints is now reduced from eighty to eighteen. All the rest are either dead or have left their situations."

Philip, landgrave of Hesse, declared, in a conference with the elector of Saxony and his son, that rather than be a deserter from the Word of God, he would lose his wealth, his dominions, and even his life. "During the year 1525, the magistrates of several of the imperial cities publicly adopted the Reformation. At Nuremberg there was a public conference, in full senate, and in the presence of many of the inhabitants, between Osiander at the head of several of the evangelical teachers on the one part, and five leading preachers of the papal party on the other; the issue of which was, that there should be no more sermons or ceremonies at the monasteries, and that the monks should no longer be exempted from the usual burdens of the rest of the inhabitants."

Hagenau, in Alsace, received the Divine Word from Wolfgang Capito. At Northusa, in Thuringia, the magistrates seconded the wishes of the people, and appointed the prior of the Augustine monastery to preach the Gospel. Many other important cities of Germany were evangelised about the same time. "You may learn," writes Luther, "from one of the clergy of Dantzic, who is come here on the express errand of requesting the prince to permit Pomeranus to go among them, how wonderfully Christ is at work in that place. We cannot well spare

him; yet, in so important an evangelical concern, we ought, I think, to give way." "Let us neither obstruct so extraordinary a call, nor pretend to be ignorant of its meaning." At Frankfort on the Maine, the people had somewhat tumultuously demanded the abolition of the popish mass and ceremonies. The papal clergy were told by the magistrates, that if they expected their support and defence, they must confute by the Word of God those tenets of the evangelical teachers, which maintained that the mass was not a sacrifice. The papistical preachers quitted three of the principal churches, which were immediately occupied by the reformers. "At Breslaw, and in most of the towns of Silesia, the Gospel still prospered under their excellent bishops, James of Salza, and Balthazar of Promnitz." But while the Gospel was in these parts triumphing over all opposition, in others some still suffered, even to martyrdom, in its cause<sup>1</sup>. In this year Luther's life was attempted by poison; a Jew doctor of medicine had undertaken to accomplish this base act for two thousand pieces of gold.

The Lutheran princes, seeing themselves threatened by the Papists, had passed a resolution at Salfeld, where they met, "That it became them, as Christian princes, to do every thing for the glory of God, and to conform their practice to the revealed Word. That by this Word, the true doctrine of justification, through the mercy of God by faith in Jesus Christ, was now once more revived; and that for this great benefit eternal thanks were due to Almighty God."

In the year 1528, the reforming princes were alarmed with the intelligence, that a number of the first potentates of Germany, with Ferdinand at their head, had concluded a treaty at Breslaw, one great object of which was, to compel the elector of Saxony and the landgrave of Hesse to re-establish the ancient religion, and to give up Luther.

The elector of Saxony, on this occasion, gave way to the advice of the landgrave, and the two princes agreed, in the former part of this year, to raise an army of twenty thousand foot and six thousand horse. "Almighty God," they said, "had graciously bestowed on them and their subjects the rich gift of the Gospel; and they thought themselves bound to protect their religion, at the hazard of their dignity, their possessions, and their lives." The Wittemberg divines, with Luther at their head, declared, in strong terms, for pacific measures. The re-

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 1525. Brandt, 53.

monstrance of Luther, to the great displeasure of the landgrave, led to a modification of the treaty, whereby it became purely defensive, and peace was for the present preserved.

The fanatical sect of the Anabaptists, the disgrace of the Reformation, as the Gnostics, from whom they were derived, had been of primitive Christianity, was still increasing in Germany and in many parts of Europe, and alike employed the efforts of the persecuting magistrate to suppress them. As had been the case in the early days of the church, the deluded zealots could imitate the unconquerable fortitude of the martyrs for the truth; and neither sword, nor fire, nor gibbet, could induce them to recant their errors; clearly proving the inefficacy of force against opinion; and, at the same time, that it is the cause, not the suffering which makes the martyr; that the zeal for our cause, which would enable us to give our bodies to be burnt, is not of itself decisive of Christian character. Every where it was the cry of these enthusiastic visionaries, "No tribute" — "all things common" — "no tithes" — "no magistrates" — "the kingdom of Christ is at hand" — "the baptism of infants is an invention of the devil!" Luther observes concerning them: "Satan rages." "The new sectarians called Anabaptists, increase in number, and display great external appearances of strictness of life, as also great boldness in death, whether they suffer by fire or by water<sup>1</sup>." These fanatics sometimes claimed to be in unison with the reformers in sentiment, and the papists were glad to confound them together as the same. Luther was therefore induced to publish on the subject: "We differ from these fanatics not merely in the article of baptism, but also in the general reason that they give for the rejection of the baptism of infants: 'It was,' say they, 'a practice under the papacy.'" "Thus it was with them a sufficient reason for rejecting any thing — that the papists had adopted it. Now we do not argue in this manner; we allow that in the papacy are many good things, and all those good things we have retained," &c.

Luther, in his judgment respecting the capital punishment of heretics, was certainly before the age in which he lived, and differed in opinion from some reformers that followed him. Being asked whether he conceived the magistrate to be justified in putting to death teachers of false religion, his wise reply was, "I am backward to pass the sentence of death, let the demerit be ever so apparent; for I am alarmed when I reflect on the con-

<sup>1</sup> Ep. ii. 366.



duct of the papists." "Among the Protestants, in process of time, I see a great probability of a similar abuse, if they should now arm the magistrate with the same power, and there should be left on record, a single instance of a person having suffered legally for the propagation of false doctrine. On this ground I am decidedly against capital punishment in such cases, and think it quite sufficient that mischievous teachers of religion be removed from their situation<sup>1</sup>."

It is remarkable that his more refined opponent Erasmus, did not advance so far into the light on this subject as Luther. "It was a fault," he owned, "to drag men to the fire for every error; but it was also wrong to contend that no heretic whatever ought to be put to death by the civil magistrate<sup>2</sup>."

Zuinglius, the great compeer of Luther in the Reformation, also differed from him in his judgment, both in respect of taking the sword in defence of religion against the sovereign authority, and in respect of the capital punishment of false teachers. He scrupled not to advise to rise in arms in opposition to the emperor; and it is remarkable that he died by the sword of war, while Luther, for whose blood so many thirsted, died peaceably in his bed.

The Anabaptists also withstood this reformer at Zurich. They persuaded a number of people, that the Reformation introduced by Zuinglius, did not go far enough, and that it was not sufficiently spiritual. They reproached Zuinglius himself with the coldness and slowness of his measures. "Now was the time," they said, "for the real children of God to separate from the rest of their countrymen, as they did in the days of the apostles; that the Spirit of God was at work, and unless men were more in earnest, there was no hope of their salvation; that the senate of Zurich were at present a motley assembly, but that a church, where all were pious members, would not fail to choose a pious senate." Zuinglius encountered these seditious teachers, at first, with the proper instrument of argument. "That there always would be a mixture of good and bad." "That Christ had directed the tares and the wheat not to be separated till the time of the harvest." "That the example of the apostles did not apply to the present times, when all men professed themselves to be Christians; whereas, the secession in those days, was of believers from infidels." "Such a violent measure would excite disturbance; it was not necessary, nor could he look upon

<sup>1</sup> Ep. ii. 881.

<sup>2</sup> Op. Eras. x. 1576.



it as suggested by the Spirit of God." "Those that pretended to form a church of perfect purity, should remember the parable of the ten virgins."

Uninfluenced by reason, and by all the endeavours of the senate, who allowed them conference after conference, the Anabaptists declared they must obey God rather than man. "They flew to the city in vast swarms, abusing Zuinglius, calling him the old dragon," rebaptised the people in the streets, boasted of having all things in common, and threatened destruction to every one who refused to follow their example." They professed to prophecy, and instead of defending their doctrine from Scripture, cried, "they were ready to seal the truth with their own blood." It was in these circumstances that the senate of Zurich — and there can be no doubt, with the sanction of Zuinglius<sup>1</sup> — instead of punishing the seditious fruits of the false doctrine, passed a decree, that all persons who professed Anabaptism, or harboured the professors of that doctrine, should be punished with death. Their cruel sentence was, "He that rebaptises with water, let him be drowned in the water:" thus imitating the example of the papists, and exhibiting a sad apology for their violence, from the general maxims of an unenlightened age. At Basle, the same example, to a considerable degree, was followed.

Only one point of doctrine, as we have seen, separated the Lutheran and the Zuinglian reformers; it was that respecting the nature of the Divine presence in the sacrament. Sensible how much this division weakened the common cause of religion, the landgrave of Hesse exerted himself to form a union of the two parties; and with this view he procured a conference to be held between them, at Marpurg, in the year 1529. On the one part appeared Luther and Melancthon; on the other, Zuinglius and Œcolampadius, with several men of note in each denomination. The conferences at Marpurg, which lasted several days, did not answer the charitable design of "the peace-maker;" it called forth the sagacious observation of Father Paul, "that the controversy having proceeded so far, it seemed as though the honour of the leaders were in question;" and that "in verbal contentions, the smallness of the difference often nourishes the obstinacy of the parties."

The peculiarity of Luther's character, which made him, when opposed to error, seem so superior to more gentle spirits — the

<sup>1</sup> See the authorities in Milner.

firm pillar of the truth, when all besides seemed pliable — now appeared like unchristian obstinacy, in resolving not to “give way one hair’s breadth” in his singular notion of consubstantiation. The Sacramentarians, as they were called, begged hard to be acknowledged as brethren; they went so far as to own repeatedly that the body of Christ was verily present in the Lord’s supper, though in a spiritual manner. Zuinglius pressed even with tears for the right hand of fellowship, and the landgrave personally exerted himself for the same purpose; but nothing more could be gained from Luther, than that “each side should shew Christian charity to the other as far as they could conscientiously, and that both should diligently pray God to lead them into the truth.” Melancthon’s account of the conference is, that Zuinglius readily gave up several things which he had advanced in his writings, particularly his notion of original sin; and that he came over to the Wittenberg divines in all points, the single article of the Lord’s supper excepted. But Luther’s more penetrating eye discerned that, besides the question on the Lord’s supper, there was not a perfect agreement in the article of original sin. Bucer acknowledges that there was a definitive disagreement between the parties respecting the sacrament, and that himself and his friends, from a desire of peace and harmony, had been induced to sign the other articles, though they were not expressed with that precision with which they would have been, if the Helvetian theologians had drawn up their own creed. Beausobre, though much prejudiced in favour of the Sacramentarians, observes, “Luther was more politic than he appeared to be.”

The views which the Lutherans took of the Helvetians and of their concessions, may be illustrated by a letter of Melancthon to Luther, written from Augsburg, at the time of the diet in the following year. “Zuinglius has sent hither his confession of faith. You would neither say more nor less, than that he is not in his senses. On original sin and the use of the sacraments, he clearly revives old errors. On the nature of ceremonies, he talks like a Swiss, that is, very barbarously: at one stroke he would abolish all ceremonies, and he would have no bishops<sup>1</sup>,” &c.

<sup>1</sup> Zuinglius, Milner concludes, “in the heat and haste of contention, sometimes sank the efficacy both of baptism and of the Lord’s supper below the true scriptural standard, and represented them as mere tokens and badges of Christian society and connexion. Bucer, his own friend and advocate, whose testimony is therefore decisive, expressly allows this. Zuinglius, in the article of original sin, probably was never completely orthodox: in regard to the fundamental doctrine

The quarrels and contests between the leading powers of the age, the emperor Francis I., and the pope, for several years so occupied their attention, that the Reformation in Germany was suffered to grow up, and the long-destined extirpation by fire and sword was from time to time diverted and deferred. The pope and city of Rome suffered, in these conflicts, the extreme rigours of war from the commanders of Charles V.; and the emperor held a language that at one time greatly encouraged the friends of the Reformation. The artful politician appears every where in the character of Charles, which led to the remark of Father Paul, "That his reverence towards the pope was no more than an art of government, covered with the cloak of religion." But no sooner had these potentates settled their differences, than they cemented their union by councils and agreements for the utter extirpation of the Reformation in Germany.

The *Recess* of the second diet held at Spires, in 1529, had been far less favourable to the Lutherans than that of the former diet. It was on this occasion that fourteen imperial cities, with the elector of Saxony, the marquess of Brandenburg, the dukes of Lunenburg, and the prince of Anhalt at their head, solemnly **PROTESTED** against the decree of the diet, and obtained from that circumstance the name of **PROTESTANTS**, which has since been used as a general term, comprehending all the sects which renounced the Romish communion. They also at this time drew

of justification by faith, though he seems always to have admitted it distinctly in theory, yet he by no means made that practical use of it which Luther and his disciples did. On the duties of Christian subjects, and also on questions relative to ecclesiastical polity, there was a still greater difference. Obey and suffer, was Luther's motto in general; whereas, the obedience of Zuinglius hung on a very slender thread."

"It is a common, and at the same time erroneous notion, that the difference of the sentiments of Luther from those of that class of Protestants on the Continent who had no connexion with *his* churches, lay very much in the article of predestination. There is a twofold mistake in this position, originating, I conceive, in an inattention to those variations of doctrine which, in the subsequent periods of the history of the Reformation, took place both in the Lutheran and the other churches that separated themselves from the Romish communion. Certainly, the Lutheran churches by degrees became more Arminian; and, in general, the rest of the Protestant churches more Calvinistic afterwards; but in truth, consubstantiation was the single point in the early part of the Reformation, on which the unhappy separation almost entirely turned." "The rupture among the first reformers was not occasioned by disputes about predestination;" "if it had been so, the sentiments of the contending parties were really the reverse of what they are commonly supposed to be," &c. — MILNER, vol. v. p. 514.

up a formal appeal, and presented it, by their ambassadors, to Charles, who was so indignant at the measure, that he ordered the arrest of the ambassadors. Their apprehensions, confirmed by the report of this violence, drew the Protestants nearer together, with the intention of forming a defensive alliance and confederacy; but the Sacramentarian controversy proved a great bar to their union, and was artfully fomented by the policy of the papists<sup>1</sup>. At the same time, Luther, in the strongest terms, exhorted the elector not to think of using force against the emperor, in defence of religion. In this he was supported by Melancthon and Bugenhagius.

In the beginning of the year 1530, the emperor sent his mandatory letters into Germany, summoning a diet of the empire, to be held at Augsburg in the following April. This was accordingly looked to as an important crisis. In the mean time, the pope and the emperor spent the greater part of the winter together in the same palace, at Bologna. The pope urged the immediate adoption of the most violent measures; the emperor's policy interposed some further delay, but he bound himself, by an unequivocal promise, to use the most efficacious measures for the reduction of all the rebellious adversaries of the Catholic religion. Cardinal Campeggio was appointed as the pope's legate to Augsburg, and the secret emissaries of Rome were actively employed in Germany, to practise her usual arts of bribery and corruption.

To meet the inspection of the approaching diet, the elector of Saxony had agreed with his divines, to draw up in a narrow compass the heads of that religious system which had produced the separation from the Romish communion. The doctrines in question had already been digested into seventeen articles, at some late conferences of the Protestants, and were, with little or no alteration, delivered by Luther to the elector, at Torgau, on his road to Augsburg. This served as a basis for a more orderly and elaborate composition, on which the pen of Melancthon was employed, and which has since been well known under the title of "The Confession of Augsburg."

About this time, Luther was employed in publishing his Greater and Lesser Catechisms, which at this day are treatises of authority in the Lutheran churches. He also accompanied Melancthon's Commentary of the Epistle to the Colossians, with a eulogy on the author, in which he declared that he preferred the

<sup>1</sup> Sleiden.

works of Melancthon to his own. "I," says he, "am born to be a rough controversialist; I clear the ground, pull up the weeds, fill up ditches, and smooth the roads. But to build, to plant, to sow, to water, to adorn the country, belongs, by the grace of God, to Philip Melancthon."

The elector of Saxony went to Augsburg, attended by several of his most eminent divines. It was, indeed, thought expedient that Luther should not enter the city; he was therefore left at a convenient distance, that recourse might be had to his advice, if necessary<sup>1</sup>. The emperor refused to receive the Confession of the Protestant faith in the full diet; but it was presented to him in a special assembly of princes and other members. This celebrated Confession, which was to speak the common sentiments of the Lutheran reformers, it should be remembered, was professedly drawn up in terms as little offensive to the papists as the statement of the truth would permit; and some important truths were meant to be inferred rather than boldly stated. It is the lowest statement they could consent to make for the sake of peace, rather than the highest attainments of their religious knowledge.

It is said that after the Confession was read, the duke of Bavaria, a zealous papist, asked Eckius whether they could overthrow this doctrine out of the Holy Scriptures. "No," replied the popish advocate; "by the Holy Scriptures we cannot overthrow it, but we may by the fathers." On this the archbishop of Mentz said to the duke, "See how finely our divines support us! the Protestants prove what they say out of the Holy Scriptures, but we have our doctrine without Scripture<sup>2</sup>." In answer to this Confession, a refutation was ordered to be prepared by the Roman divines, which should be read in full diet. On the presenting of this, Melancthon thus writes to Luther: "At length we have heard the confutation, and at the same time the emperor's sentiments, which are sufficiently bitter. Before this document was read, he declared that he was resolved to abide by the opinions he had caused to be there stated, and desired that our princes would adopt the same; but if they refused, he, as the defender of the church, would no longer tolerate the German schism. This was the sum of his oration, which, infamous as it was, the Catholics welcomed with prodigious applause." In another letter he intimates, "that their adversaries had used threatening language to terrify the princes

<sup>1</sup> Maimb. lib. ii. — Seckend. lib. ii. p. 152.

<sup>2</sup> Milner.

from their adherence to the doctrines of the Reformation." They assured the elector of Saxony, that unless he abjured the Lutheran doctrines, the emperor would raise an armed force to compel him; and that he would be deprived of his dignities, his possessions, and even his life, with all who professed the same faith, their wives, and their children<sup>1</sup>.

"We expect," says Melancthon; "violent measures; for no moderation can satisfy the popish faction; they, in fact, seek our destruction. Pray that God may preserve us<sup>2</sup>." The decree stated expressly, that it should not be lawful to deny "free will," or to hold the opinion "that only faith doth justify<sup>3</sup>."

An apology for the Augsburg Confession was drawn up by Melancthon, and though refused by Charles, was afterwards published. In the apology are the following remarkable expressions: "To represent justification by faith ONLY has been considered objectionable, though Paul concludes that 'a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law,' 'that we are justified freely by His grace,' and 'that it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.' If the use of the exclusive term ONLY is deemed inadmissible, let them expunge from the writings of the apostle the exclusive phrases, *by grace* — *not of works* — *the gift of God*, and others of similar import."

The decree of the diet was published on the nineteenth of November, in a high tone of authority, asserting the Roman catholic tenets, and condemning those of the Protestants. "All alterations or innovations are strictly prohibited; all who refuse to obey, are put under the ban of the empire. The princes, states, and cities, who had rejected the papal authority, are required, under pain of exemplary punishment, to return to their allegiance to Rome<sup>4</sup>."

It was known also that the emperor had pledged himself to unite with a confederacy of the popish princes, to compel the execution of the decree, and maintain the Roman faith.

The Protestant princes retired from Augsburg full of alarm. Melancthon considered the cause as desperate, but Luther still maintained that fortitude for which his character was so eminent, and continued those exhortations which cheered and encouraged all his friends. The lively interest which he took in the conferences with the Protestant states and princes, in which they entered into a league of defensive alliance against the papal

<sup>1</sup> See Milner.

<sup>2</sup> Father Paul, lib. i.

<sup>3</sup> Milner.

<sup>4</sup> Sleid. Hist. p. 139.



party, led his adversaries to declare him an advocate of disobedience to the imperial authority, which accusation produced a vindication from the press.

Whether the distinctions made by Luther, with respect to the resistance of the imperial authority, on this occasion, will be deemed sufficient according to the spirit of the Gospel precepts which the reformers had hitherto with great constancy maintained, will perhaps appear doubtful to some. The constitution however of the German empire or confederacy, must be taken into the consideration. But certainly, from this period, we must look upon the contest between the Papists and the Protestants in Germany, as a political contest, to be decided by the sword and by the councils of princes. The faithful witnesses for the truth, ready to seal their testimony with their blood, "like sheep accounted for the slaughter," retire from our sight, and champions of another description stand forth, to maintain by arms the cause of that religion which forbids to resist evil. But the prediction of the Divine oracle was again seen to be verified: "He that takes the sword shall perish by the sword." As far as concerned those who from a religious principle took up arms, the issue of the contest was destructive and ruinous; and, for a short time, it appeared to have extinguished all public profession of the doctrines of the Reformation in Germany. It pleased God, however, to rescue the victory out of the hands of Charles; not by blessing with success the sword drawn in the cause of the Gospel by its faithful professors, but by an instrument as treacherous, as unprincipled, and more crafty than Charles himself.

The elector John of Saxony did not live to see this conflict; he died in the year 1532, and was succeeded by his son, John Frederick. Luther's life was lengthened fourteen years beyond that of the elector John; and he died in the beginning of the very year in which the Protestants took the field against the emperor; for so long a time, from various causes, was the crisis deferred, between the two great parties which now divided the empire. The public testimony of Luther and his friends, may be said to have been finished when they delivered in the Confession of Augsburg. The contest was no longer between the excommunicated heretics bearing witness to the truth against the thunders of Rome, but the half of Germany, arrayed in arms and united in league against the confederacy of Charles the Fifth, and the princes and states whom bigotry or political interest united under his banners.



The reformers, though retiring from the notice of history, still laboured in the duties of their special vocations, and saw the success of their labours in the peaceful progress of the Word of God. Of Luther, however, his biographer is led to remark, that though "he continued to discharge, with his accustomed zeal, his official duty as a preacher and a professor, and published commentaries on various parts of Scripture, and shewed no inclination to relinquish his former habit of sending forth a popular treatise whenever circumstances in the state of religion appeared to call for it;" yet, "amid these various occupations, it was remarked that his enterprising spirit appeared to undergo abatement; and that in his latter years he was found to hazard no new doctrines. This alteration should, however, be ascribed as much to the matured state of the Reformation, as to the progress of Luther's years. The season was now come in which it was fitter to defend established principles, than to advance others that were new. Judicious and appropriate as this plan of conduct was, it has unavoidably the effect of shortening the narrative of Luther's latter years<sup>1</sup>."

During these years, this great reformer, who has claimed so large a portion of our attention, in narrating the history of the church of Christ, was chastened by long and painful sickness. Had he "in this world only hope in Christ," the laurels of a reformer, like the successes of worldly ambition, might have seemed, as far as concerned himself, vanity and vexation of spirit. "I write to you," he says to a friend a little before his death, "though old, decrepit, inactive, languid, and now possessed of only one eye. When drawing towards the brink of the grave, I had hopes of obtaining a reasonable share of rest, but I continue to be overpowered with writing, preaching, business," &c. A little after the date of this letter, he set out on a journey, to arbitrate in a dispute between the princes of his native country, Jan. 17, 1546, respecting those very mines where his father's labours had supported his infancy. At Eisleben, his native town, on the 18th of February, the hand of death was permitted to seize his mortal body, and he "fell asleep in Jesus." He had been accustomed for several nights, on taking leave of his party, to address them thus: "Pray to God that the cause of his church may prosper, for the Council of Trent is vehemently enraged against it." His last words were, "O my heavenly Father, eternal and merciful God, thou hast revealed to me thy

<sup>1</sup> Bower's Life of Luther, p. 267.

Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. I have preached him, I have confessed him, I love him, and I worship him as my dearest Saviour and Redeemer — him, whom the wicked persecute, accuse, and blaspheme !” He then repeated three times the words of the psalm, “ Into thy hands I commit my spirit : God of truth, thou hast redeemed me !” After this, the voice that had sounded such an alarm among the nations upon earth, became faint and indistinct ; and it was soon perceived that he had departed into the world of spirits.

A brief narrative of the religious war<sup>1</sup> in Germany may suffice for this present work. The Protestants had assembled at Smalkalde, where they concluded a league of mutual defence against all aggressors ; by which they formed the Protestant states of the empire into one regular body, and resolved to apply to the kings of France and England, and to implore them to patronise and assist their new confederacy. They received secret encouragement from the former, from political motives ; the latter, though, as we shall see hereafter, engaged in abolishing the papal dominion in his own kingdom, gave only general promises, with a small supply of money. Charles V. from motives of policy, and not yet prepared to encounter so firm a resistance, relented from his rigorous measures, negotiated with the Protestants, and granted favourable terms in a pacification which was agreed upon at Nuremberg, and solemnly ratified in the diet at Ratisbon. “ No person was to be molested on account of religion.” “ The Protestants were to assist the emperor against the Turks.” Thus, those who had hitherto been viewed only as a religious sect, came henceforth to be considered as a political body of no small consequence.

The year following<sup>2</sup>, the emperor commanded in person against the Turks, who finally retreated before him. After some fruitless negotiations with the pope respecting a general council, Charles departed to Spain<sup>3</sup>, and during this and the following year was chiefly occupied in political contests with the French and Italians<sup>4</sup>. Clement VII. died, and was succeeded by Paul III. In the same year, the insurrection and horrible excesses of the Anabaptists took place in Germany ; but they were finally subdued in the following summer<sup>5</sup>. The increasing power of the league of Smalkalde becomes more evident. The emperor was occupied with his famous expedition into Africa ; at the same

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 1531.<sup>2</sup> A.D. 1532.<sup>3</sup> A.D. 1533.<sup>4</sup> A.D. 1534.<sup>5</sup> A.D. 1535.

time, a new war broke out between him and Francis. The French king attempted to form an alliance with the princes of the League; but they refused to treat with him, from the horror which they felt at the cruel treatment of the reformers in his own dominions. This war occupied Charles during the following two years. At length a truce of fourteen years was agreed upon between the parties, under the arbitration of the pope<sup>1</sup>, chiefly from fear of the Turks. All this proved greatly conducive to the growth of the Reformation. Though earnestly pressed by Charles, the Protestants refused to acknowledge a council called by the pope<sup>2</sup>. The king of Denmark, and other powers, acceded to their league. This year died the duke George; he was succeeded by his brother Henry, who, as well as his subjects, was attached to the Reformation. The Protestants had now the satisfaction of seeing that the possessions of the princes and states attached to their cause, extended, in one great and almost unbroken line, from the shore of the Baltic to the banks of the Rhine. In the following two years the emperor was still engaged in Spain, and in his last unfortunate expedition in Africa. The rapid progress of the Turks in Hungary, and the prospect of a French war, induced him to grant the Protestants, in private<sup>3</sup>, the full possession of all the privileges they enjoyed.

About this time<sup>4</sup>, Maurice, who was afterwards to act so conspicuous a part in the affairs of Germany, succeeded his father Henry in the government of that part of Saxony which belonged to the Albertine line. His ambition pointed out to him a peculiar line of policy. With great political sagacity he perceived that the Protestants were likely to prove the weaker party in a contest which he foresaw; he therefore refused to join the League of Smalkalde, and though he affected to be zealous for the Reformation, courted with much pains the favour of Charles<sup>5</sup>. The long-expected council was at length summoned at Trent, but the pope found himself obliged to prorogue it. The Protestants, confident of their strength, pursued their measures with vigour, and till the end of the following year the emperor was still engaged in war with the king of France<sup>6</sup>. A peace was then concluded between these great potentates. By a secret article, they contracted to unite all their influence and authority to extirpate the Protestant heresy out of their dominions. His ill state of health, and the unfinished war with the Turks, still

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 1538.<sup>2</sup> A.D. 1539.<sup>3</sup> A.D. 1540.<sup>4</sup> A.D. 1541.<sup>5</sup> A.D. 1543.<sup>6</sup> A.D. 1544.

induced the emperor to defer the execution of his grand scheme; but, in a diet held at Worms in the following year<sup>1</sup>, he threw off the mask, refused to confirm the indulgences hitherto granted to the Protestants, and demanded their submission to the Council of Trent. They, on their part, declared their resolution not to submit their cause to an assembly under the influence of the pope, and which had been called, not to examine their demands, but to condemn them. Maurice, however, playing a deeper game of policy than the politic Charles himself, ingratiated himself with the emperor by acceding to all his demands. Not yet prepared to crush the power of the League, Charles artfully concealed his intentions, by appointing another diet to be held the following year at Ratisbon, in order, as he said, "to adjust what was now left undetermined." His hostile intentions, however, were cruelly expressed by the unrelenting rigour with which he persecuted, in his hereditary dominions, all persons suspected of Protestantism. He also encouraged the canons of Cologne against their archbishop, who had zealously embraced the doctrine of the Reformation, and which was received about the same time also in the Palatinate<sup>2</sup>. In the mean time, the Council of Trent was opened with great solemnity; a measure which had filled the mind of the dying Luther with its last cares "for the ark of the Lord," before he was most mercifully "taken away from the evil to come."

Charles still attempted to amuse the Protestants; they were, however, apprised of the schemes of the pope and the emperor by Henry VIII. and the merchants of Augsburg.

At length, having concluded a truce with the Turks, and gained over Maurice and some other princes, he no longer concealed his hostile designs. To the alarm and surprise of Charles, the Protestants took the field with an army of 70,000 foot and 15,000 horse, and with a train of 120 cannon, and at length declared war against him. He had now been joined by his Spanish forces and the papal troops. The Protestant leaders, though greatly superior to the emperor in military forces, were ill-united among themselves, and durst not attack him in his fortified camp. Fresh troops having joined the emperor from the Low Countries, he began to act more on the offensive. He gained, however, no superiority during the autumn; but at this period a most unexpected event decided

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 1545.

<sup>2</sup> A.D. 1546.

the contest, and occasioned a fatal reverse in the affairs of the Protestants. Maurice fell upon the electorate; this caused a separation of the confederates, and, once divided, they became an easy prey to the emperor, who, seeing his advantage, kept the field during the winter. Almost all the members of the League submitted: a confederacy, lately so powerful as to shake the imperial throne, fell to pieces, and was dissolved in a few weeks. Hardly any member of that formidable combination now remained in arms, except the elector of Saxony and the landgrave of Hesse. To these, the emperor, who had from the beginning marked them out as victims of his vengeance, was at no pains to offer terms of reconciliation. Various events for a short time suspended the blow; but Charles, being relieved from his apprehensions by the death of the French king, resolved to march against the elector, who had gained some advantages over Maurice. On the 13th of April<sup>1</sup>, he defeated and took him prisoner in the battle of Mulhausen. The captive prince was compelled to surrender his electorate, which became the reward of the treacherous Maurice; but no threats nor entreaties could induce him to renounce his religion: here, though not with the arm of flesh, he was invincible. The landgrave of Hesse was induced also to submit, and was treacherously detained a prisoner.

The emperor led about in triumph the two captive princes wherever he went, and trampled without opposition on the members of the late confederacy. He proceeded to hold a diet at Augsburg. Having surrounded the city with his victorious army, he took possession of the cathedral by force, and restored the Romish worship. The diet was very fully attended. Charles was at great pains to make the Protestant princes submit to the decision of the Council of Trent. The elector Palatine was overawed. Maurice, from interested motives, was prevented from opposing. The elector of Brandenburg followed their example. The deputies of the cities were more tenacious; they could be induced to submit only on condition of a free debate in the council, and that the controverted points should be determined by Scripture and the usage of the primitive church. When the memorial containing this declaration was presented to the emperor, he ventured to put in practice a very extraordinary artifice. Without reading the paper, or taking any notice of the conditions on which they had insisted, he

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 1547.

affected to understand that his proposal was accepted, and thanked the deputies for their promise of submission to the decrees of the council. The deputies, astonished at what they heard, did not attempt to set him right.

The council which had been opened at Trent had been removed to Bologna by the pope, from a jealousy of the emperor, and for some time it resisted every proposal for its return to the former place. This induced Charles to protest against the council held at Bologna, and in the mean time to adopt a measure known by the name of the INTERIM. Three divines, appointed by the emperor, drew up a scheme of doctrine, to serve as a rule of faith for Germany; to which all were to conform, till the council which they demanded should be held. Every doctrine, however, peculiar to popery, was retained, and the observation of all the rites, some of which the Protestants condemned as idolatrous, was enjoined. This was laid before the diet, May 15th, 1548. The elector of Mentz, unauthorised by the rest of the electors, suddenly arose and declared their submission and approbation. "Not one member had the courage to contradict what the elector had said; some being overawed by fear, others remaining silent through complaisance. The emperor held the archbishop's declaration to be a full constitutional ratification of the INTERIM, and prepared to enforce the observance of it, as a decree of the empire<sup>1</sup>."

In the *Formula ad interim*, as Melancthon observes in his reply, the fundamental article on justification by faith alone, was denied. "It states," says he, "that a man is justified or made righteous by the exercise of love as a work;" "and though it states in some places that a man becomes righteous through faith, the meaning evidently is, that faith is a preparation of the heart beforehand, and that afterwards a man is rendered righteous by the work of love. It asserts also, that there may be true faith, although a man live with an evil conscience and have no love; and that love constitutes a meritorious title to eternal life;" "so that a man is justified and pleases God by his own works." The Interim also asserted the pope to be the head of the church, in virtue of the prerogative granted to Peter. It maintained his right to be the interpreter of Scripture. That the sacrament is a sacrifice—the intercession of the saints "who help us by their merits," prayer for the

<sup>1</sup> Robertson's Hist. of Charles V.



dead, and every essential to popery<sup>1</sup>, were also retained. The language, indeed, was rendered as ambiguous as possible, but no sound Protestant could mistake it. The partisans of the court of Rome disliked it, because it allowed the cup in the sacrament to the laity, and mitigated the vows of celibacy; but chiefly, because it was promulgated by the authority of a secular prince<sup>2</sup>.

In the autumn of this year, 1548, Charles proceeded in earnest to enforce this odious measure. He began with the city of Augsburg, which he disfranchised, and compelled the new magistrates to swear to observe the Interim. From Augsburg he proceeded to Ulm, and seizing all the pastors who refused to subscribe, committed them to prison, and when he departed led them in chains after him. The example had its full effect; not in changing the public sentiment of the German Protestants, but in enforcing that degree of conformity to a measure they abhorred, which might just screen them from a violence which they could not resist. The inhabitants of Strasburg and Constance, after a long struggle, were compelled to submit. Melancthon laments, that "Upwards of four hundred pastors in Suabia and the circles of the Rhine are driven from their stations; there is but a single officiating minister at this moment at Tübingen, who conforms to the book published at Augsburg; it has had the effect of driving away all the pastors and teachers." Some who did not quit their stations, gave it a feigned compliance, or through connivance were never brought to the decisive test. Melancthon, who at this time appeared as the successor of Luther, though his testimony is clear that on no condition would he receive the Interim, was far from withstanding it with the spirit and consistency which Luther shewed on similar occasions. He gave it as his opinion, that though the whole of the book could not be received, yet it might be received as an authoritative rule in things *indifferent*; and some things on which Luther would perhaps have hazarded all, Melancthon, as some represent, from his yielding disposition, was content to consider as indifferent. From Melancthon's reply to the Interim, and from

<sup>1</sup> Sleid. Hist.

<sup>2</sup> It is remarkable, that the Liturgy of the Church of England bears to this day a mark of the alarm of our reformers, in consequence of this victory of the emperor over the Protestants in Germany. On this occasion was added to the petition, "Give peace in our time, O Lord"—the concluding sentence, "Because there is none other that fighteth for us, but only thou, O God."



the documents which remain of his answer to his calumniators, we have no difficulty in concluding, in the language of a contemporary, "That the highly learned, and no less godly, gentle, and loving man, Philip Melancthon, is highly belied, in that a great sort openly say that he has denied the truth : or, that I may use their own words—recanted." But still it may be feared, that the public testimony of this amiable reformer, was not sufficiently firm and decided for him on whom the mantle of Luther had fallen. It is certain that the elector Maurice, in the pursuit of his political scheme, had prevailed with his divines to have the INTERIM publicly acknowledged in Saxony, and Melancthon's qualifying distinction "as a rule in indifferent things," smoothed the way for it. This doubtless was the design of the peaceful reformer. Maurice, however, intended that the public construction upon the act should, at least, for a time, be very different in the eyes of the emperor and of the world ! And, what had already been yielded, and what the Interim, if a longer reign had been permitted to it, would have led to, appears from Melancthon's own complaint : " We do not call magical consecrations, worshipping of images, the procession of the Host, and other similar services, openly condemned both in our discourses and writings, nor other absurdities, as nocturnal visits to the tombs of saints, *indifferent things* ; but *they are shockingly multiplied* ; either for the purpose of provoking us, or with a crafty design to impose heavier burdens upon the pastors, and they do us an injury while they humour their own passions<sup>1</sup>." It is plain, however, that Charles V. was not satisfied with the concurrence of Melancthon, and had even summoned him to appear before him ; but the crafty Maurice knew how to screen him by apologies. And it is equally plain, that could the emperor have fully established and rendered permanent the measure of the INTERIM, Protestantism had been lost in Germany.

But Charles had not time to reap the fruits of his victory, or entirely to extinguish the sparks of the religious and civil liberty which he was trampling beneath his feet, before the arts of political dissimulation, in which he was so well versed, were turned against himself, to the sudden and complete overthrow of all his preponderating power in Germany. Maurice, indeed, had so satisfied Charles, that he was appointed generalissimo to enforce the INTERIM at Magdeburg, which still held out. This

<sup>1</sup> See Cox's Life of Melancthon, p. 488, &c.

he accomplished ; but after having long amused the emperor, he openly took the field against him, March 18th, 1552. From this moment, the Interim, so ill and so reluctantly obeyed by the favourers of the Reformation, became a dead letter. When the oppressor's hand was removed, things naturally returned to their former state. " Maurice proceeded by rapid marches towards upper Germany. All the towns in his way opened their gates to him, and every where he re-instated the magistrates whom the emperor had deposed, and gave possession of the churches to the Protestant ministers whom he had ejected." The emperor was taken by surprise, and fled in great confusion from Inspruck. The Council of Trent, which was to have been his great instrument in riveting the chains he had already cast upon Germany, at the report of Maurice's approach, took the alarm also and dispersed. A proclamation was immediately issued, " That as the enemies of the truth had no other aim than that the teachers of the holy religion being first oppressed, the popish errors might be restored and the youth brought up in them, having imprisoned some, and made others to swear to depart, and not return again, which oath doth not bind because it is wicked, they are all recalled and commanded to resume their office of teaching, according to the Augsburg Confession."

At Passau, on the 26th of May, a stipulation was entered into for the public exercise of the Protestant religion, and the " peace of religion " was afterwards concluded in the same place. " Such was the memorable peace of Passau, that overturned the vast fabric, in erecting which Charles had employed so many years, and had exerted the utmost efforts of his power and policy ; that annulled all his regulations with regard to religion ; defeated all his hopes of rendering the imperial authority absolute and hereditary in his family ; and established the Protestant church, which had hitherto subsisted precariously in Germany, through connivance or by expedients, upon a firm and secure basis." The result of the triumph of Maurice is very remarkably described in Father Paul's history of the Council of Trent<sup>1</sup>. " The cities recalled their preachers and the teachers of the Augustine Confession, and restored the churches and schools, and exercise of religion, and though on account of the banishments and persecutions against the preachers and teachers, there remained but few of them, and

<sup>1</sup> End of Book IV.

those concealed under the protection of the princes; yet, as if THEY HAD RISEN AGAIN, there wanted not to furnish all places<sup>1</sup>."

## CHAPTER THE SECOND.

### THE EFFECTS PRODUCED BY THIS REFORMATION, ON THE NATIONS OF EUROPE.

THE German Empire, which had been chosen by Divine Providence for the early seat of the revived Gospel, and where the rising interests of the Reformation had stood the chief conflict with the powers of darkness, and in the sight of its enemies had shared its dominion with them, was more likely than any other nation, to affect by its revolutions, whether religious or political, the general state of the rest of Europe. The position of Germany with respect to other countries, but more especially the peculiarity of its constitution, which gave all surrounding potentates a stake of interest in its divisions and internal contests, called, in a particular manner, the attention of mankind to any thing of importance that should happen therein. Accordingly we find, that every nation of Europe was more or

<sup>1</sup> Philip Melancthon died in 1560, at the age of sixty-three, continuing the labours of his station till the last. A little before his death, he had written down on a piece of paper, in two columns, the reasons why he should like to leave the world, and why he should be glad to enter on the more blessed state. On the left he wrote, "You will cease from sin;" "you will be freed from the vexations and raging of the theologians." On the right, "You will come to the light;" "you will see God;" "you will look upon the Son of God;" "you will learn those wonderful mysteries which you could not understand in this life;" "why we are made as we are;" "what is the union"—'copulatio'—of the two natures in Christ." He had conversed much with Camerarius, on the language of St. Paul: "I have a desire *to depart* and be with Christ;" and had observed "the Greek word should be rendered, *to remove*, pass on or set about, proceeding on a journey." In allusion to this, when removed a little before his death to a bed in his study, he observed; "This may be called, I think, my *travelling couch*, if I should *remove* in it." He had his request, "that he might depart in peace." To the solicitous requests of his attendants, if he would have any thing, his reply was, "Nothing else but Heaven." He begged of them several times, when they would adjust his clothes, or try to anticipate some want, "not to disturb his delightful repose." Thus, in the death of this gentle reformer, it seemed, indeed, as though "the fruit of righteousness was sown in peace of them that make peace." Compare the death and resurrection of the Witnesses, in the Revelation.

less affected, at a very early stage, by the progress of the reforming principles in that country. The public mind was every where agitated by the spirit of inquiry which had been awakened, and the political constitutions of the most ancient kingdoms were shaken in this new contest about religion.

Switzerland, as we have seen, nourished the same leaven in her bosom ; and being similarly constituted in her government, was, like Germany, divided in her different sovereignties, between the Roman catholic and the Protestant faith. In England, a kingdom of the first rank in the Roman world, the popedom fell to the ground. France was long convulsed, and seemed at one time half Protestant. Even Spain and Italy felt for a time the shocks of the distant explosion. The rest of Europe situated to the north, beyond the ancient boundaries of Roman civilisation, particularly Denmark and Sweden, soon united themselves with the Protestant part of Germany.

The reformers, however, it will be recollected, had differed among themselves on the question of the nature of the Presence in the sacrament of the Lord's supper. This proved to be the occasion of a division which could not be healed, and which was followed with injurious consequences. The Protestant world was separated into two great classes, the Lutheran and the Helvetian. The latter was so called from the country of Zuinglius and his associates ; but its churches were afterwards more generally distinguished from those of the immediate followers of Luther, by the appellation of the ' Reformed,' or ' Calvinistic churches.' The sacramentarian controversy is to be considered as that which alone produced this division. Luther was stern upon the point of consubstantiation, and the maintaining of this doctrine was the distinctive mark of Lutheranism. All who could not accede to this article of belief, whether, with Zuinglius himself, they explained the words of the institution of the Lord's supper as merely figurative, or with Bucer and Calvin, and by far the greater part of the divines of the reformed church, maintained a real presence, and actual participation of Christ in that sacrament,—all fell under this latter denomination.

With Luther sided, generally, at first, the northern part of Protestant Germany, with the kingdoms of Sweden and Denmark. He had also his followers in Belgium, and for a short period, in most other countries. The sentiments of the reformed church, however, spread in the south of Germany, as

well as in Helvetia; they prevailed also among the Protestants in France and the Low Countries, and were embraced by the churches of the British Isles. Hence, of the two branches of the Protestant faith, that which put forth first became at length by far the least flourishing; and Lutheranism, which was in fact the plant, as it first shot up, as if blighted and checked in its growth by the unkindly error of consubstantiation, soon dwindled in importance, and the Helvetian branch became the leading shoot, and seemed to draw to itself all the sap and nourishment of the tree, for its own future growth and increase.

## SECTION I.

### THE RECEPTION OF LUTHERANISM IN SWEDEN AND DENMARK.

At the time of the Reformation, the papal superstition seemed to be no where more firmly rooted than in Sweden and Denmark. The Romish hierarchy had swallowed up the wealth of these kingdoms; and while the ancient nobility were reduced to comparative poverty, the bishops possessed revenues which sometimes equalled or exceeded those of the sovereigns, and held in their hands castles and fortresses which often set the power of the crown at defiance. This overgrown wealth had the usual effect, in corrupting the manners of the clergy, and had thereby greatly undermined the credit of their superstition, before the fabric of their power was attacked and laid prostrate by the reforming spirit. In both these countries this revolution was accomplished chiefly under the patronage of the state, by two monarchs of very different characters; that in Sweden by the truly patriot king Gustavus Vasa, and that in Denmark by the cruel tyrant Christiern II.

Christiern having invaded Sweden and usurped the crown, Gustavus with difficulty escaped from his murderous hands, and sought refuge in Germany. During his sojourn there, he learned and embraced the principles of Luther; and after he had assisted in the deliverance of his country, and had been elevated to the throne, he very wisely and strenuously exerted himself for the establishment of Lutheranism in his own dominions. Olaus Petri and his brother Laurentius, who had studied under Luther at Wittemberg, were the first preachers of the Reformation in Sweden. Under the royal patronage, and

assisted by another Lawrence, surnamed Andreas, they achieved the all-important measure of translating the Scriptures into the vulgar tongue. Gustavus proceeded with admirable fairness. At the same time that he ordered the publication of the Lutheran version, he permitted the archbishop of Upsal, on the part of the Roman catholics, to publish their own translation of the sacred writings. He also checked with the strong arm of power the riotous proceedings of the Anabaptists, who had pursued into Sweden the track of the preachers of the Gospel.

In the year 1527, at an assembly of the states at Westeraas, Gustavus completed the work of reformation. He there publicly declared, on the opposition of the ecclesiastics, “ that he would lay down his sceptre, and retire from his kingdom, rather than rule a people enslaved to the orders and authority of the pope, and more controlled by the tyranny of their bishops, than by the laws of their monarchs.” The king’s will entirely prevailed. The hierarchy was reduced to a very low level, and deprived of the greater part of its wealth and power. No ecclesiastical preferments were to be disposed of without permission of the crown. The Reformation was now introduced into Sweden without much further contest; Laurentius Petri was appointed by the king to the archbishopric of Upsal, and Sweden became a Protestant state.

The odious tyrant Christiern II. had pursued similar methods in Denmark; not for the love of truth, or to extend the religious privileges of his people, but in order to seize on the rich spoil of the church’s wealth, and to enlarge the powers of his crown. In the year 1520, he sent for Martin Reinhard out of Saxony, and appointed him professor of divinity at Hafnia; and after his death, he invited Carolstad to succeed him. The violence and cruelty of Christiern, however, soon united the Danes against him; he was deposed and driven from the kingdom in 1523, and Frederick, duke of Holstein, was raised to the throne. This prince equally favoured the Reformation, and conducted his measures with more equity, prudence, and moderation. At the assembly of the states, held at Odensee, in 1527, he procured an edict, which declared every subject of Denmark free either to adhere to the tenets of the church of Rome, or to embrace the doctrines of Luther. This, in the state of the public mind, was all that was necessary to introduce the Reformation into Denmark. Christiern III., who succeeded Frederic, proceeded further to lower the power and wealth of the hierarchy. He sent for Bugenhagius from Wittenberg,

and, according to plans suggested by him, made a new settlement of the ecclesiastical state throughout the kingdom, and a solemn sanction was given to these proceedings, at an assembly of the estates at Odensee, in the year 1539. Thus, protestantism became firmly established in Denmark. But the subsequent commotions, excited by the prelates hostile to the reformation, caused a still further reduction of the episcopal office, till the name and authority were almost lost in the appointment of the Protestant superintendents.

## SECTION II.

### THE PROGRESS OF THE REFORMERS OF THE HELVETIAN CONFESSION.

The Reformation in Switzerland, as we have seen, began under Zuinglius, very soon after Luther appeared in Germany; and its progress in the former country seemed to keep pace with the advance of Luther and his followers. Germany, indeed, exhibited the chief scene of contest between Rome and the revolters from its spiritual tyranny; but the reformers in Switzerland made an important diversion in favour of the latter, and the Helvetians reaped abundantly the fruits of their victories.

At the conference of Marpurg, the difference between Luther and his followers, on the one hand, and Zuinglius and his friends, on the other, on the subject of the presence in the Lord's supper, was manifested to be irreconcilable. Luther on that occasion would admit of no compromise, nor would he make the slightest concession respecting the doctrine of consubstantiation. The Helvetian divines were far from being agreed among themselves as to the precise notion they would attach to the sacred rite; but none of them could consent to receive Luther's strange dogma, and they were necessarily thrown into a new community of reformers, distinct from the Lutherans, and beheld by them with no small degree of prejudice and bigotry. At the side of Zuinglius, at Marpurg, appeared Oecolampadius and Bucer; and from the same community arose afterwards Peter Martyr, Bullinger, Myconius, and many others, and more especially the celebrated John Calvin. Particular circumstances occasioned the name of the latter to be given to all the churches of the Helvetian or reformed confession, the term Calvinistic becoming a general appellation for them all, in distinction from the Lutheran churches. And also at a still later period, down even to our own times, as if



the remembrance of Luther's doctrines had been obliterated by the departure of his followers from that standard, the same term 'Calvinistic' has been applied to that scheme of doctrine, which Luther and the greater part of the first reformers held in common, and publicly maintained against their Roman Catholic adversaries. The advocates who appeared for the Romish church in this age, were almost all of them Pelagians or Semi-pelagians on the doctrines of grace, as appears evident in all their controversies with Luther and the subsequent reformers. Some few there were, still remaining among the Papists, who, as the disciples of Augustin, coincided with the reformers on the doctrines of grace and election. Between these and the reformers the great fundamental distinction in doctrine was, that the Augustinians held salvation by 'inherent righteousness,'—by grace as an infused quality; while the Protestants maintained justification through faith alone in the merits of Christ; and by grace, in its primitive signification, the gratuitous favour and mercy of God.

We cannot better trace the foundation and increase of the reformed church, than by attending to the labours and successes of its early teachers. Zuinglius, we have seen, was established in the principal church of Zurich, the chief town of the Swiss Canton of that name. Here his opinions finally prevailed. Besides his seeming to reduce the Lord's supper to a mere memorial and nothing more, he attacked the whole fabric of the ecclesiastical government; and not content with removing the corruptions of later ages, appeared to pay no regard whatever to the most ancient institutions of the Christian Church, and almost surrendered every exercise of spiritual authority into the hands of the civil magistrate.

Notwithstanding the remonstrance of the emperor, and the opposition of the bishops of Constance, Basil, Lausanne, and Sion, and of eight of the Swiss cantons, the reformation under Zuinglius and his coadjutors gained ground in many places. In 1528, he assisted at a general assembly at Bern, where the doctrines of the Roman church were condemned. The example was followed by the Cantons of Basil and Schaffhausen. After a considerable contention between the Cantons, it was determined "that there should be liberty of conscience throughout Switzerland." In the same year, however, that the league of Smalkalde was formed by the German Protestants, 1531, a civil war broke out between the five Catholic Cantons, and those of Zurich and Bern. The Protestants were defeated in their own country, and Zuinglius,

who accompanied the army — it is said, according to the custom of Zurich — was killed in the action. He is reported to have exclaimed when falling, “ They can only kill the body.” His body having been found among the slain, was insulted and burnt to ashes by the Papists. The report of the death of Zuinglius is said to have heightened the disorder, and hastened the end of his friend *Æcolampadius*, who had assisted him in all his labours in the cause of reformation, and had exercised the last years of his ministry chiefly in Basil and its neighbourhood. On his death-bed, asking a friendly visiter, “ What news ?” and receiving in reply, “ None,” he said, “ I will tell you news. In a short time I shall be with Christ my Lord ;” and laying his hand upon his breast, he said, “ Here is abundance of light.”

The Roman catholics rejoiced greatly on the death of these two reformers, and concluded that with them the interests of the reformation would fall in Switzerland<sup>1</sup>. They were, however, much mistaken ; the cause still flourished at Zurich under *Bullinger*, the successor of Zuinglius, and at Basil, under *Myconius*, who followed *Æcolampadius* ; as it did also, in many other parts, under the surviving contemporaries of the deceased pastors.

Among these, *Martin Bucer* must be mentioned as eminent for his abilities and success. At a very early period of *Luther*’s public career, he had become acquainted with that reformer, and had embraced his views. It was at a time, however, respecting which *Luther* afterwards had occasion to reflect : “ I was ignorant of many things, which, by the grace of God, I now understand.” So *Bucer* remarks on his progress in divine knowledge : “ It disturbs some, because they make no doubt that many will take offence that I seem not very consistent with myself, because the Lord has given me to understand some places more fully than I formerly did, which, as it is so bountifully given to me, why should I not impart liberally to my brethren, and ingenuously declare the goodness of the Lord ? What inconsistency is there in profiting in the work of salvation ? Or who, in this age, or in the last, has treated of the Scripture, and has not experienced that, even in this study, one day is the scholar of another ?”

We find *Bucer* among the reformed preachers at Strasburgh, who, in 1524, publicly renounced popery. In the sacramentarian controversy, *Bucer* could not accede to *Luther*’s doctrine of consubstantiation, which threw him among the Helvetican divines,

<sup>1</sup> Father Paul.

<sup>2</sup> Preface to Commentaries on the Gospel.

though he differed considerably from Zuinglius and his friends on the nature of the sacrament, holding, as the reformed churches afterwards very generally did, a real presence,—“that the body and blood of Christ are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord’s supper,” “after a spiritual and a heavenly manner, but actually and really.” This scheme was thought by some to bid fair to reconcile the two parties, and Bucer laboured ardently to that end, on more than one occasion, and apparently with some success<sup>1</sup>. But after Luther’s death, notwithstanding the leaning of Melancthon towards this statement, the Lutherans became still more rigid and bigoted to the doctrine of consubstantiation.

Luther’s friend describes Bucer at the Marpurg conference, as being as cunning as a fox. In somewhat more courteous language, cardinal Contarene describes his abilities as a disputant. “They,” the German divines, “have, among others, Martin Bucer, endowed with that excellency of learning both in theology and philosophy, and besides, of that subtlety and happiness in disputation, that he alone may be set against all ~~our~~ learned men.”

In his notions of church government, Bucer did not go the same lengths as some of the other divines of the reformed church,

<sup>1</sup> At one time, indeed, he seemed to have less difficulty in satisfying Luther of his soundness on this point, than some of the Zuinglian divines. He told Bucer and his brethren, on one occasion, “that if they did believe, and would teach that the true body and blood of Christ were offered, given, and taken in the Lord’s supper, and not mere bread and wine; and that this participation and exhibition were made really, and not after an imaginary manner; they were agreed among themselves, and he would acknowledge and embrace them as brethren in Jesus Christ.” The doctrine of consubstantiation Bucer could not digest; but he thought the opinions of the Zuinglians were too narrow, and did not come up to the ideas which the Scripture and ancient tradition imprint upon our minds. “Besides a power of signifying,” Bucer acknowledged “a power of exhibiting or presenting Christ himself; and that the Lord, in the communion of his body and blood, is given and received, whereby we are members of him in part, and flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone; whereby we abide in him, and he in us; and that it is given and received when the Lord himself operates in his ministry, and when the words and symbols are received as the Lord’s, and, as it were, from the Lord himself, by free dispensation through his ministers, which they call a union; not sensual, local, or natural,—but sacramental, and of the covenant, on account of those texts of Scripture, which speak of the mystery of the incorporation of the church, and of the communion and eating and drinking of the flesh and blood of Christ\*.”

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\* Correspondence with de Lasco.

in opposition to the Romanists. He approved of the ancient and original form of episcopacy, as it existed in the primitive church, which appears in the reformation he prescribed to Herman, archbishop of Cologne, who sent for him in the year 1542, and in his approbation of the episcopal reformed church in England. This plan of reformation was even stigmatised by the term Bucerism, by some of the reformers on the continent, of the Helvetic persuasion.

Martin Bucer continued at Strasburgh till the critical period of the INTERIM. Compelled to flee on that account, he was invited to England by Edward VI., at the instance of archbishop Cranmer, and was fixed in the chair of the divinity professor, at Cambridge.

About the same period, Peter Martyr, another eminent divine of the reformed church, had been invited into the same country, and appointed to the same office in the university of Oxford.

Peter Martyr, an Italian by birth, was a man of great learning, and, like Luther, belonged to the order of the Augustines. He was at first abbot of Spoleto, in the papal dominion, from which abbacy he was translated to St. Peter's ad Aram, in the city of Naples; and, finally, was elected prior of St. Fridian, in the city of Lucca, a place of great dignity, and possessed of an episcopal jurisdiction. During his residence at Naples, he met with the books of Bucer and Zuinglius, which opened his eyes to the true nature of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and in which he was still further established by his acquaintance with Valdes, a Spanish lawyer, who had embraced the Protestant faith. Peter Martyr followed his example in 1542. Compelled to flee his country, he, in company with Ochinus, who, like himself, from being one of the most popular preachers in Italy, had been converted from the Romish superstitions, proceeded to Zurich, and thence to Strasburgh, where he taught divinity for five years. He was then invited into England, to assist in carrying on the reformation in that kingdom, and he arrived there in the year 1547, with his friend Ochinus, who had departed with him from Italy.

The Helvetic communion had also been enlarged by the accession of Geneva. Farel, a French refugee, and Viret, had preached the glad tidings of the Gospel there, soon after the year 1530. By the fury of the clergy they had been driven out of the city, but were recalled by the inhabitants in 1534, who were now disposed to throw off the Roman yoke, as they had revolted from the civil authority of their bishop, which he had exercised over them in the name of the duke of Savoy.

It was at this period that John Calvin, who, as Mr. Gibbon remarks, is, with Luther and Zuinglius, to be celebrated as a deliverer of nations, happened by chance, (as we say when the premeditated designs of men are not purposely employed to execute the counsels of God,) to be travelling through Geneva. By the earnest entreaties of Farel, Viret, and the inhabitants of that city, he was induced to stop there, in order to assist in settling the reformation; and, by the common suffrage, he was chosen both preacher and professor of divinity.

John Calvin was a minister of the reformed church in France. Our Hooker remarks concerning him, "For my part, I think Calvin incomparably the wisest man that ever the French church did enjoy since it enjoyed him." He was born at Noyon, a town of Picardy, in France, in the year 1509. His parents were in a situation to bestow upon him the first education of the times, an early residence in a nobleman's family, and after that, instructions in the university of Paris. It appears that he was at first designed for the church, and benefices were procured for him by his father. But both the father and the son changed their minds. The former saw a more profitable arena for his son's abilities in the study of the law, and John Calvin's own mind had been awakened to a true estimate of the Roman Catholic superstition, by Olivetan, a relation, who was a minister among the Waldenses.

After having finished his education at Paris, he studied the civil law at Orleans and Bourges. Calvin's progress in his profession was great, but another study, that of the Scriptures, lay nearest to his heart. Those hours of the day which could be purloined from his legal pursuits, were devoted to this object; and the hours which nature demands for rest, were so much trespassed upon, that it is but too probable that at the same time he laid the foundation of his great theological knowledge, he imbibed the seeds of those disorders which brought him to an untimely grave. Wolmar, the Greek professor at Bourges, who was secretly a Lutheran, encouraged him in his scriptural studies. In his twenty-fourth year, Calvin returned to Paris, and formed an acquaintance with those who favoured the reformation in that city, among whom he ever remembered with particular regard, Stephen Forgeus, an eminent merchant, who afterwards suffered in the flames. From this period, Calvin, relinquishing all other studies, devoted himself entirely to the work of the ministry in the French reformed church, which had, even then, (about 1532,) its secret meetings in the city of Paris.

As early indeed as the year 1523, the doctrines of Luther had penetrated into many parts of France, and had been encouraged by persons of great rank in that country, especially by Margaret, queen of Navarre, the sister of Francis I. The great encouragement which this monarch gave to the revived study of classical literature, tended at the same time to cherish the reforming principles in religion; but more particularly his political situation, as the rival of the emperor Charles V., led him into public measures conducive to the same end. This often made him anxious to strengthen the Protestant interest in Germany; and, in order to cultivate the friendship of its princes, he appeared, at times, to treat the reformers in his own country with lenity, and even with some degree of favour. All this honour was only the fruit of a subtle policy. As the seeds of the reformation took root in his dominions, he discovered himself to be a most abject slave to the Romish superstition, and a most cruel and unrelenting persecutor. He was heard to declare, when alarmed at the growth of protestantism, that "if he thought the blood in his arm was tainted with the Lutheran heresy, he would cut it off; and that he would not spare his own children, if they entertained sentiments contrary to those of the Catholic church." In this disposition of mind, he committed many to the flames, not only in Paris, but in all parts of his kingdom.

Calvin narrowly escaped the effects of his intolerant spirit during the first year of his ministry. In an annual speech, publicly read by the rector of the university, and which Calvin had assisted in preparing, were some statements respecting religion, which immediately excited the displeasure of the Sorbonne and the parliament, and gave occasion to a new persecution. The rector fled, and Calvin escaped from the hands of those who were sent to apprehend him in the college, only by means of sheets tied from his window. His papers, and a correspondence which implicated many persons, were seized. The queen of Navarre, however, had interest sufficient to avert this storm. Calvin retired from Paris, but continued to propagate his doctrines in various cities in the south of France, both by his preaching and his publications; and, as had been done in the early days of the Christian church, he administered the sacrament to his disciples in dens, and secret recesses of the rocks and mountains. In 1534, he returned secretly to Paris, in the midst of a very severe persecution which then raged there, in order to counteract the efforts of Servetus, who had begun to disperse his



books against the Trinity, and had challenged Calvin to a conference. Servetus did not keep his appointment, and Calvin found it necessary, on account of the persecution, to flee from his native country. Before his departure, he published, at Orleans, a tract against those who were reviving an ancient error, particularly discouraging in an age of martyrdom, respecting the sleep of the soul after its departure from the body, until the time of the resurrection.

Calvin made choice of Basil for the place of his retreat. Here he published his celebrated work, the "Christian Institutions," so justly esteemed one of the chief productions of the reformers of the sixteenth century, and long considered as a standard publication, especially for students in theology in our own church, and throughout the reformed world. The occasion of the publication of this work, was a gross calumny of the French king, who, to apologise to the German princes for the cruel executions of the Protestants in his own kingdom, when he sought their alliance, had asserted "that he had punished none but such as held the opinions of the Anabaptists, who substituted their enthusiastic fancy for the word of God, and contemned all magistracy." The Christian Institutions were designed to be a full statement of the principles of the reformation, as they stood opposed to the Romish corruptions on the one hand, and to the heresies of these mischievous fanatics on the other; and it is a remark of some importance to be remembered, that most of the public formularies of the Protestant churches in this age, were drawn up in similar circumstances, and stand equally opposed to popery and to the principles of the Anabaptists.

After publishing his book, Calvin undertook a journey into Italy, to wait on the duchess of Ferrara, a daughter of Louis XII., and one who favoured the reformation. Intending to return to Basil, he went to settle his affairs in France, and finding no way open but that through the duke of Savoy's dominions, on account of the war which then raged, he proceeded by that route, and was thus brought as an accidental traveller to Geneva, where, as has been observed, he was retained, and Geneva became the future scene of his labours and ministry, and to this circumstance owed its subsequent celebrity among the churches of the reformed.

In Geneva, however, Calvin found it more easy to bring the people to abjure popery, than to compose their differences among themselves, or to induce the mass of the population to submit to the discipline of a Christian church. Some of the customs, also, of the churches of Bern, which had been received at



Geneva, were displeasing to Calvin, and he refused to follow them. For the present, therefore, the opposite party so far prevailed, that Calvin and his friend Farel were banished the city, 1538. Calvin departed to Basil, and thence to Strasburgh, where Bucer and his co-pastors gladly received him. The professorship of divinity was conceded to him, and a church of French refugees was soon collected under his pastoral care.

In this station he continued till the end of the year 1541, when the Genevese became sensible of their loss, and of the impolicy of driving from them a man of Calvin's estimation. The universal cry of the people was now for the restoration of Calvin. The friends of the reformation felt the importance of Geneva as a station for the Gospel, on account of its easy communication with both France and Italy, and they advised the return of Calvin. He did not, however, yield to the request of the people, till he had brought them to consent to swear that they would observe for ever a form of discipline which he had drawn up. The constitution he gave them enacted a standing ecclesiastical court, of which the ministers were to be perpetual members. To these were added double their number of laymen, who were to be chosen annually. This court was to determine all causes relating to the affairs of the church, and possessed a censorship over the morals and manners of the people. No person was to be exempt from the jurisdiction of this consistory, which, if necessary, was to proceed to the sentence of excommunication. This institution, it is evident, lodged a very extensive power in the hands of the clergy, the perpetual members of the court; and in the hands of such a man as Calvin, who, during his life, was perpetual president, it was, in fact, an investiture of more than episcopal authority.

A zeal for the enforcing of church discipline may be considered as the characteristic distinction of this reformer; and, from having been placed in a situation so remarkably favourable to his views, his example and success stimulated the zeal — perhaps the ambition — of many churchmen in a subsequent age. His object was, not only, by labouring in the word and doctrine, to convert and edify the souls of his people, but, by the exercise of discipline through his consistory, to compel a multitude professing the Christian faith to submit to the moral restraints of the Gospel precepts. Drunkenness and debauchery, profaning the name or the day of the Lord, heresy, and blasphemy, did not fail to receive the judgment of the presbytery. Even the amusements of the people, when they seemed to offend again

their sense of propriety, were under the inspection of the same censorship; nor were their sentences to be despised in existing circumstances, though they inflicted, directly, no civil penalties. In many cases, however, the government of the republic lent the aid of the secular arm, even to the sentence of banishment, and capital punishment.

In a conflict which arose with the civil power, Calvin was enabled, by the weight of character which he possessed, to achieve a victory, which may be compared with any triumph of ecclesiastical power, in former times. Bertelier, a register of one of the courts of justice, had been suspended from the sacrament by the presbytery, on account of his vicious life. He appealed to the senate of Geneva, who, it appears, wished to claim the final judgment in causes requiring the sentence of excommunication. The senate granted letters of absolution to Bertelier, sealed with the seal of the republic. Calvin, before the celebration of the sacred mysteries, declared in a public discourse, "I will rather suffer myself to be killed, than this hand shall reach forth the sacred things of the Lord to those who have been adjudged contemners of God." "It is wonderful to be told," says Beza, "how powerful was the effect even upon the most refractory." Bertelier was advised not to present himself. "The mysteries were celebrated with a silence that struck the attention, attended with a tremulous awe, as if the Deity Himself was in sight." In the afternoon, Calvin, in his sermon, took leave of his people, as not being willing to strive with "them that are in authority." The decree of the senate was, however, immediately suspended, and the decision of the case was referred to the judgment of the four Helvetian cities, who gave it for Calvin, against the senate: not, however, with the full approbation of the ecclesiastical constitution of Geneva, which differed considerably from their own, respecting the authority of the civil power in ecclesiastical regulations.

From his return to Geneva, Calvin presided over the church and university of that city for nearly three and twenty years, and died in the year 1564. Both the church and the university under his care flourished exceedingly, and rose to a degree of eminence in the Protestant world, that seemed to throw into shade the former glories of Wittemberg. Beyond the narrow boundaries of Lutheranism, Calvin seemed to occupy, in the eyes of the world, the station in which Luther had once stood at the head of the reformation. He was a man most indefatigable in his labours. By the publication of his books, he greatly

promoted the cause of the Gospel, and his remaining correspondence shews him to have been much interested, and to have been much consulted in the concerns of all the churches where the reformed faith was received. Luther, Calvin, and Zuinglius, seem by very general consent to be placed in the first rank of the reformers. Zuinglius must be considered as the first leader of the Helvetian churches, as Luther was of the reformation in Germany.

The importance of the station assigned to Luther in the reformation was, however, superior to that of all others. That reformation was considerably advanced when Calvin appeared in the ascendant, and his station was merely that of the successor of Zuinglius, the most eminent among the Helvetic divines, as Melancthon was among the Lutheran; but the Helvetic community was now raised up far above the Lutheran, and the primacy of Luther seemed to pass rather to the successor of Zuinglius than to his own, as the praises of the friends of the reformation, and the reproaches of its enemies, have long since proclaimed.

On the nature of the divine presence in the Lord's supper, Calvin fully agreed with Bucer; and this became the prevailing opinion in the reformed churches. He plainly asserted a real presence; and though he admitted not the consubstantiation of the Lutherans, any more than the transubstantiation of the papists, yet his opinion differed very widely from the earlier Zuinglians, who made the words of the institution merely figurative and symbolical<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> "The communion which we have in Christ, is not only figured in the supper, but afforded; nor are mere words there given us from the Lord, but the verity and the thing itself corresponding to the words.

"This communion moreover is not in the imagination, but that by which we coalesce into one body and into one substance with our head." *Epist. Col.* p. 23. In other parts of his works he states, that "the nature or mode — '*ratio*' — of this communion is beyond the human comprehension, and must be referred to a miracle; nor must we be ashamed to say with St. Paul, 'It is a great mystery.' " Calvin expresses in a letter to Farel, that Philip Melancthon himself thought altogether as they did respecting the presence in the Sacrament; and he felt persuaded, that "had that eminent servant of God and faithful teacher, Martin Luther, been alive, he would not have been so harsh and implacable," — as some of the Lutherans now were, — "but would freely have admitted this confession, that the sacraments truly supply what they figure, and that therefore in the sacred supper we are made partakers of the body and blood of Christ. For how often has he declared, that he contended for no other cause, but that it might be established, that the Lord does not amuse us with empty signs, but does internally fill those things which he places before the eyes, and that the effect is united with the signs. Unless I am very much deceived, this is agreed upon amongst us, that

On the doctrines of predestination and grace, now called Calvinism, it would be difficult to say wherein Calvin, and the divines of whose circle he was the centre, differed from Luther, or from Augustin before him. The great distinguishing doctrine of the reformation, justification by faith alone, he taught also like Luther, perhaps with greater correctness and distinction, respecting the nature of the faith that justifies, and the assurance it should give to the believer's mind. He was indeed a most strenuous assertor of church authority and ecclesiastical discipline ; but the example he left at Geneva, is more to be attributed to the difference of his situation from that of some of the other reformers, than to any difference in their sentiments as to the general necessity of restoring the ancient discipline<sup>1</sup>. The

the supper of Christ is not a theatrical exhibition of spiritual food, but in very deed does give what it represents, because these pious souls are fed with the flesh and blood of Christ."—P. 84.

<sup>1</sup> How little countenance the disturbers of the peace of other churches, from the love of the Geneva discipline, or the promoters of the cause of schism in general, receive from the example of Calvin, appears in several parts of his correspondence, and particularly in a letter to Farel, during the time of their expulsion from Geneva. Some of their friends, whom they had left behind, consulted him, " whether it was lawful to receive the Lord's supper from the hands of those ministers who were obtruded upon them in their stead, and whether they ought to communicate with such a *rabble* — '*cum tanta hominum colluvie.*' " To this, with the concurrence of Capito, he answers, " The hatred of schism among Christians ought to be so great, that they should ever, if possible, avoid it. That so great ought their reverence of the ministry and of the sacraments to be, that wherever they see them existing, there they should conclude the church to be. Since, therefore, it was by the Lord's permission, the church was governed by these, whatever they are ; if they behold there the marks of a church, it would be better not to separate themselves from its communion, nor should it be an obstacle that some unsound doctrines — '*impura quædam dogmata*' — were taught there ; for scarcely any church is there, which does not retain some remainders of ignorance. It is sufficient for us, if that doctrine on which the church of Christ is founded, hold and maintain its place. Nor ought it to deter us, that he ought not to be considered as a lawful minister, who has not only fraudulently crept, but wickedly intruded into the place of the true minister ; for it is not for every private individual to perplex himself with these scruples. In the sacraments they communicate with the church ; that by the hands of such persons, they should be dispensed to them, they sustain as an evil\*. It concerns such ministers, indeed, very seriously to consider whether they lawfully or unlawfully possess their places ; but others may suspend their judgment till a lawful recognition can be obtained. Meanwhile, they may use their ministry," — " and exhibit a testimony of their patience" — " without any hazard of seeming to approve or sanction their usurpa-

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\* *Epistolæ Calvini*, p. 5.

odium of episcopacy, and the assertion of the divine right of the presbyterian form of church government, so violently contended for in the following age, are not to be ascribed to Calvin himself<sup>1</sup>.

After a life of incessant labours in the cause of religion, this great reformer died in his fifty-fifth year. His vigour of mind continued to the last. When he was urged to relax in his duties, his reply was, "What, would you have me idle when my master is coming?" At the same time, his feeble body had to sustain a complication of the most distressing and painful disorders to which the human frame is subject. The exclamation, "Lord, how long!" was often wrung from him through the sense of his sufferings. Hearing, a few days before his death, that Viret, in his old age, was undertaking a journey to see him, he wrote to beg him to desist: "I draw my breath with difficulty, continually expecting it will fail. It is enough that to Christ I live and die, who, to those that are his, is gain in life and death." His last days he seemed to spend in almost continual prayer. Of his bodily organs, all affected with disease, his clear, bright, shining eye, lifted towards the heavens, could alone express the ardour of his soul. In the midst of his pains he feebly uttered, "I held my tongue, O Lord, for it was thy doing." "I did moan as a dove," was his reflection on his groans extorted by his sufferings. Beza, who was with him, heard him say, "Thou, Lord, hast bruised me, but it is quite enough for me that this is thy hand." His final dismissal was most easy and peaceful, like one who quietly fell asleep. Not even a heavier breathing indicated the departure of the happy spirit.

tion," &c. Again: — "Where the doctrine is sound and pure, and the ceremonies are used for decency and civil ornament, we ought rather silently to pass these things over, than raise contentions and stir about them\*."

<sup>1</sup> The cruel death of Servetus, who suffered for heresy at Geneva, by the sentence of the magistrates of that city, while Calvin presided over the church, is, with great want of just discrimination, and with some degree of ignorance, often referred to, as particularly marking the character of Calvin, as distinguished from that of the other reformers. A hatred to the doctrines to which his name is applied, is probably the cause of this. It seems to be forgotten, that it was the common opinion of the age, that the magistrate ought to visit with capital punishment all teachers of heresy in fundamentals and blasphemers. An exception should, perhaps, be made for Luther, who doubted the policy rather than the justice of it. All the reformers were of this opinion. The gentle Melancthon praises the magistrates of Geneva for this very act, and expresses his very great surprise, that any one should call in question its justice or propriety.

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\* *Epistolæ Calvini*, p. 147.

The perpetual dictatorship at Geneva, if it may be so called; ceased with the life of Calvin; a parity between the ministers was introduced, though Theodore Beza appears eminent among his successors.

### SECT. III.

#### THE EFFECTS OF THE REFORMATION IN BELGIUM, OR THE LOW COUNTRIES.

The early impression made on these countries, then subject to the sceptre of Charles V., by the doctrines of the reformation, is marked by a placard, which was published in the name of that Monarch, by Margaret of Austria, Governess of the Netherlands, in the year 1521. Luther is there described as a “devil in the shape of a man, and in the habit of a monk, that he may more easily occasion the eternal death and destruction of mankind.” All those books which contained any allusion to the Scriptures, or its doctrines, were prohibited, without the approbation of the ordinary and the faculty of divinity in the nearest university. In the following year, the emperor commissioned Francis Vander Hulst, his chancellor in Brabant, to make strict inquiry into the religious opinions of the people of the Low Countries, and with his colleague Van Egmont, he proceeded with the most furious zeal to execute his orders, on the mere suspicion of heresy, throwing numbers into prison. The first of these inquisitors, Erasmus designated as a “great enemy to learning;” the latter, as “a madman, in whose hands they had put a sword.”

Cornelius Grapheus, secretary to the city of Antwerp, a friend of Erasmus, was an early object of their persecution; and though he recanted on a public scaffold, he was nearly ruined in his property. It was discovered that the Austin Friars of the same city read and approved the works of Luther. Many of them were therefore imprisoned. Their prior Henry of Zutphen, of whose subsequent martyrdom in the north of Germany, notice has already been taken in the account of Luther, made his escape out of prison. Three of the monks were degraded and condemned to the flames, 1523. Two of them, Henry Voes and John Esch, were executed together. While the fire was being lighted, they repeated the creed, and then sang together the *Te Deum*, in alternate verses, until the force of the flames silenced their chant. The third friar, for some cause or other, was taken back to prison and privately put to death.



These were the protomartyrs of the reformation in Belgium. Their deaths but ill effected the purpose which their persecutors designed. Erasmus has remarked that the city of Brussels, where they were executed, "had been perfectly free from heretics, till this event; but many of the inhabitants immediately after began to favour Lutheranism." Notwithstanding this example, it appears that the Augustine Friars of Antwerp were not cured of their heresy. A man of the name of Nicolas, in the following year, for addressing the people where one of these friars was expected, but could not appear, because a price was set upon his head, was, by order of the magistrates, put into a sack and thrown into the river.

The Lutherans still continued to hold their assemblies without the walls of Antwerp. The inhabitants of Holland, Zealand, and Flanders, very generally embraced the doctrines of Luther. The correspondence of Erasmus marks the progress of these opinions. "The nuns in my country," Holland, "run away from their convents, trusting the providence of God." Dorpius, professor of divinity at Louvain, and Philip de Lens, secretary to the emperor in the court of Brabant, were reported to be favourable to these opinions; and Deleen, a learned professor of Embden, declared himself of the same mind. Persons of eminence, both among the clergy and the laity, in several parts of the country, ventured to espouse the same cause. But martyrdom was still the lot of many. John Van Backer, a young man in holy orders, is particularly mentioned; in 1525 he was strangled and burnt. As he passed the prison where many were in confinement for the confession of the truth, he exhorted them to constancy, and was answered by their shouts and the clapping of their hands; and till the martyr had expired—for it seems the place of execution was within hearing—they encouraged him by singing the *Te Deum* and the hymns of the church. It is said, that the constancy of Backer, at that time, preserved the lives of some others, as the judges became softened. But about the middle of the year 1526, the emperor published another placard against the Lutherans; another followed in 1528, and another in 1529. The relapsed were, without distinction, to be burnt. On the first conviction, the men were to suffer by the sword, and the women to be buried alive. The better to find out heretics, one half of their estates, not exceeding the sum of a hundred Flemish livres, was promised as a reward to the informers. The apprehension and death of many followed.

In 1531, Margaret of Austria died. The emperor committed



the care of the province to his sister Mary. At this time a printer was executed for being concerned in making an impression of the Bible ; and a cruel edict was published against all writers and printers of new books. In 1532, six persons of one family were burnt at Limburg.

But before this period, the Anabaptists, the bane of the reformation, had followed it into the Low Countries, and proved a far more destructive enemy to its cause than the persecuting governments themselves. If any thing indeed could have stopped its progress, and made mankind, from the fear of greater evils, content to live still in papal darkness and tyranny, the diabolical spirit which now actuated these fanatics would have been sufficient to have done it. To the same zeal which the reformers shewed against the papacy, they added the principle, and acted upon it, that all wicked governors and priests were to be massacred, that they the saints of God might take the kingdom. To their cruelty they added the most infamous and savage treatment of the female sex, that is perhaps recorded in the history of civilised nations.

The Low Countries were much overrun by these fanatics, about the same time that Munster was seized by a party of them in Germany. In Holland they committed great disorders. In 1535, thirty or forty of them resolved to set the city of Leyden on fire ; but not being joined, as they expected, by the mob, fifteen men and five women were seized and executed by the magistrates.

It appears by the archives of Amsterdam, that about fifty men and women of these sectaries, in this same year, were apprehended for running naked through the streets of that town, crying “ Wo to Babylon <sup>1</sup> ! ” As the ancient Gnostics had done, they imitated, to the utmost, the constancy of the dying martyrs of Christ, and being every where the victims of the same persecution and industriously confounded with them by the Papists, the records of martyrology, without great discrimination, will no longer mark the conflicts of the truth with papal darkness in the Low Countries.

Many of the disciples of Luther perished under the imputation of crimes and sentiments which they abhorred. The number of sufferers in the Low Countries, of all sorts, was prodigious.

The presence of the emperor in 1540, increased the violence of the persecution. To the different parties of the Anabaptists, who kept increasing with the real reformation, is to be added the

<sup>1</sup> Brandt.

sect of the Libertines. This sect abounded much in France and the Netherlands. They may be classed with the Antinomian Gnostics of the first century. They made little account of public worship, or of the ministry of the word. All religious professions seemed indifferent to them. They held themselves to conform to any, or to none, as happened to be most for their convenience. Calvin complains of these Libertines, that when he exhorted the reformed in France to leave their country, to preserve a good conscience, they jestingly answered: "Can't a man go to Heaven without passing through Geneva?" He says of them in another place: "These closet-philosophers, who live under the Papacy, say, 'Is it not a fine thing that a man should not be a Christian unless he trots to Geneva, to have his ears stuffed with sermons, and use the ceremonies that are observed there? Cannot a man read and pray by himself? must he go into a temple in order to be instructed, when every body has the Scriptures in his own house?'"

In the year 1555, Charles V. resigned Spain and the Low Countries to his son Philip, who proved to be the most bigoted and cruel of all the persecuting princes of the age. This prince resided chiefly in these provinces, till the year 1559, and employed his utmost power to root out all sects hostile to the church of Rome, without any distinction or discrimination. The blame of all was indeed chiefly charged on Luther and the friends of the reformation. Notwithstanding every opposition, however, and every hinderance from the sectaries, true protestantism kept increasing.

Brandt observes, that "the constancy of the martyrs raised so great a compassion in the minds of the people, that many persons did not scruple to comfort them when they were going to the place of execution, and to sing psalms with them. At last, whole communities of Protestants undertook, in several places, to carry away the confessors, when they were at the point of being put to death." In so many ways was the public opinion shewn, that Philip II. was obliged, by an edict, to order that all "farces, plays, songs, and ballads, in which the affairs of the church and religion were mentioned, should be prohibited." When Philip departed into Spain, he gave the government of the country to Margaret, duchess of Parma, his natural sister, and left strict orders with her and the privy-council, to extirpate heresy.

The states of the Low Countries met at Ghent, in 1559, where the bishop of Arras, in the king's name, recommended to them the same subject, the extirpation of heresy. Many of the

members could not forbear to express their uneasiness at the design of setting up the Inquisition. "The Low Countries," they said, "were not used to such a yoke; the bare name of Inquisition made them tremble; heresy was an evil which might be cured by milder remedies than fire or sword," &c. These remonstrances had little effect on the bigoted mind of Philip. When the danger of his losing, by his severity, some of these provinces, was suggested by his ministers, he declared, "He had rather be deprived of all his dominions, than hold them embued with heresy!" On his embarkation at Flushing, he ordered the prince of Orange to put to death some persons of note, who were suspected of heresy. The prince, however, gave the parties private notice, in order that they might effect their escape.

The persecution still continued. In 1563, the reformed, or Calvinists of the Low Countries, published a Confession of Faith, agreeing almost entirely with that of the reformed churches in France. A new edition of this Confession was published in 1565, inscribed to the king of Spain. About this time, the reformed were so increased in number, that they began to meet publicly in most provinces. The first assembly of that nature was held in July 1566, in a field near the city of Horn, where, such was the earnestness of the people to hear the word of God, that the ministers preached to them for four hours together. At length, the nobility of the Low Countries began to enter into a confederacy, to suppress the Inquisition and shelter the Protestants from persecution. The people, in different parts of the country, began to rise, and great excesses were committed by the mob in Antwerp and Flanders. Above four hundred churches were plundered in three days. Many of the Monks were ill-used. Both the reformed and the Lutherans drew up remonstrances to Philip on this occasion, and while they condemned these violent proceedings, they petitioned for the public exercise of their religion, "in which they were resolved to live and die." The prince of Orange also drew up a petition to the king, in which he acquainted him with the state of religious feeling in the Low Countries. Many attempts were made, but with little effect, to unite the Lutherans and the reformed. In prospect of a league, count Lewis of Nassau, brother of the prince of Orange, together with other deputies of the nobility, were sent to Amsterdam, Antwerp, Tournay, and Valenciennes, for this purpose; but the disagreement about the Sacrament of the Lord's supper was still the chief obstacle.

This want of agreement proved almost the ruin of the Pro-

testants. The prince of Orange retired into Germany ; the Protestants forsook the Low Countries in crowds, to avoid persecution, and fled to Embden and other places. " The gallows were full of dead bodies, and Germany full of refugees." In the town of Tournay, the estates of above a hundred rich merchants were confiscated ; many reformed ministers were put to death ; the churches of the Protestants were pulled down ; and in some places, especially in Flanders, the beams of their churches were made use of to hang those who had built them. The duke of Alva, of infamous memory, arrived with an army. The counts of Egmont and Horn, and other persons of eminence, were thrown into prison. This so increased the terror of those who favoured the Reformation, that, together with those who had already fled, above 120,000 are said to have forsaken their country. Notwithstanding this, the duke of Alva and his " bloody court," delivered, in a very short time, 1800 people, of both sexes and of all ages, into the hand of the executioner ; and the rage and cruelty of the inquisitors exceeded every thing that had been known even among the heathen persecutors. It was by them proposed to the king, and approved by him, that all the inhabitants of certain provinces, except those whose names had been sent to them, should be declared heretics, or abettors of heresy, and be considered as guilty of high treason ; and particularly the nobles who had petitioned against the Inquisition.

It was in these dreadful circumstances, that the prince of Orange undertook to relieve his native country, and made great levies of men in the states of the German Protestants, and among the refugees. This excited, more than ever, the fury of the persecutors on their helpless victims ; and without abating the persecution, the horrors of a civil war, by sea and land, were added to the sufferings of the Low Countries. The prince of Orange ordered the Roman Catholics every where to be protected, as well as all other sects, in the liberty of conscience ; but it was impossible, on many occasions, to check the fury of his followers, when successful in the field, and some most unchristian scenes of revenge and of wanton cruelty were witnessed. The king of Spain, when it was too late, became convinced that his extreme severity had been prejudicial to his interests. The duke of Alva was recalled in 1573. This monster boasted, " that he had delivered into the hands of the executioners above 18,000 heretics and rebels, without reckoning those who died in the war." This civil war in the Low Countries, of which the Reformation in Germany was the occasion, raged for several years, and ended in

formation of a new Protestant state in Europe, under the title of THE SEVEN UNITED PROVINCES.

## SECT. IV.

### THE EFFECTS OF THE REFORMATION IN FRANCE, ITALY, AND SPAIN.

A particular reason assigned by the Helvetic divines, in their correspondence with Calvin, why he should resume his station at Geneva, was, the convenient situation of that city for the keeping up of an intercourse with the reformed in France and Italy. In the former country, the principles of the reformation were still spreading. Both Calvin and Farel were French refugees; and Calvin still corresponded with the queen of Navarre, and with other eminent persons who favoured the cause. Olivetan, by whom Calvin first had his mind awakened to the true nature of the Romish superstitions, as has been already noticed, was a minister of the Waldenses; and there appears to have been a remnant of these ancient professors of the truth preserved, to coalesce with the reformed church in France. To Olivetan is ascribed the grand achievement of translating the scriptures into French. The psalms of David were also translated, and set to appropriate tunes, and the constant custom of singing these psalms for their comfort and edification, appears quite a distinctive feature in the history of the early French reformers. The principles of the Reformation had made an early progress in the city of Meaux, where Brissonet, the bishop, encouraged them. Farel had preached there under his protection, and also James le Fevre d'Etaples, and Gerard le Roux, who renounced an abbey and bishopric, to suffer affliction with the people of God. The members of this church were, by persecution, dispersed throughout France. John le Clerc, founder of a reformed church at Metz, in Lorraine, had suffered in the flames; and also Aymond de Lavoy, a minister of Bourdeaux, whose last words were remarkable: "My flesh lusteth against the spirit, but shortly I shall cast it away: I beseech you pray for me. O Lord, my God, into thy hands I commend my soul!" Numbers, at the time when Calvin fled, suffered in different parts of France, 1534. In the following years, many perished in the flames, especially in the years 1540 and 1541. In 1543, the parliament of Rouen condemned four to be burnt. At Paris, the selling of Calvin's Institutes was prohibited with great severity. In that city,

Peter Bonpain, the pastor of a congregation in Aubigny, was burnt; at Rouen, Husson, an apothecary of Blois, for dispersing religious books; and in 1546, Peter Chapot, for bringing a number of Bibles into France, and selling them. Fourteen were burnt alive at Meaux. Francis D'Augy was burnt by a sentence of the parliament of Toulouse. The deaths of these martyrs for the truth, like the accounts of the fall of great military leaders in the history of a campaign, mark the spots where the chief struggles existed, and where the knowledge of religion was penetrating the regions of darkness.

Francis I. died in 1547, and was succeeded by Henry II. In the reign of this prince a multitude of martyrs fell, as may be seen in Beza's History of the French Church. In 1557, a congregation of Protestants was discovered in Paris. The place of their assembly was surrounded, and many were seized, of whom nine were burnt. Phillippa de Luns, the widow of a noble, in Gascony, was one of them. She was only twenty-three years of age. The most barbarous tortures were made use of in her execution. This execution was intended to intimidate; but it was very far from producing the desired effect. The reforming principles spread in many parts of France, and several persons of rank were known to be favourable to the cause; particularly Antony Bourbon, king of Navarre, his brother Louis, prince of Condé, and his other brothers.

Henry II. we are told, came into the Parliament of Paris at the very time they were debating respecting the punishments to be enacted against the heretics, and ordered two of the counsellors, Faber and Du Bourg, who spoke somewhat in favour of the reformers, to be seized. While the proceedings against these counsellors were going on, the king was killed by a wound received in his eye at a tournament. It was recollected that he had declared "he would see the execution of Du Bourg." Du Bourg suffered with these remarkable words: "O Lord, my God, forsake me not, lest I forsake thee."

Francis II. succeeded, being at the same time king of Scotland, in right of his wife Mary Stuart; he reigned only to the end of the following year. His brother, Charles IX., a boy nine years of age, was then placed on the throne. Catharine of Medicis, the mother of these two princes, had at this time the chief authority of the kingdom, and parties began to be formed from political motives, which threw the kingdom into a most ruinous civil war. On the one part were the Guises, one of the most powerful families in France. The cardinal of Lorraine and



his brother Francis, uncles to Mary, queen of Scots, were then at the head of this family. In opposition to these appeared the Bourbon princes, near relations to the king; at the head of whom was Louis, prince of Condé. The Guise party were notorious for their hatred and persecution of the reformers, wherever their power extended. The Bourbons, on the other hand, patronised them; and thus, to their great injury and final destruction, the French Protestants became a great political party in the state.

At the beginning of the reign of her son Charles, Catharine of Medicis affected to hold the balance between the two parties. In 1561, a conference was held between the Papists and the Protestants, but without effect; the Pope and council of Trent would yield nothing. On the part of the latter appeared, on this occasion, Theodore Beza, Peter Martyr, and Augustin Marolatus. A civil war was the consequence, in which it is calculated that upwards of 50,000 Protestants perished. Wherever the papal party prevailed, the most unoffending of the Huguenots, as the reformers in France were now called, were persecuted with the most merciless and horrid barbarity; but we cannot say with truth that these cruelties were without retaliation on the part of the Protestants.

After considerable losses on both sides, this first civil war was ended by a peace between the parties, in 1563. The Protestants were allowed liberty of conscience. The peace, however, lasted but a short time; a second civil war broke out in 1567; and before it was well composed, a third in 1568. In the following year, the Protestants made peace on advantageous terms, and four cautionary towns were delivered into their hands. But when the Protestants thought themselves secure, and the heads of their party were treated with all apparent marks of favour by the court, a most dreadful tragedy was preparing, as perfidious and cruel as any proceeding that has stained the annals of the most barbarous nations. A marriage had been projected between the young king of Navarre, afterwards the celebrated Henry IV., and a sister of the French king, and the principal persons among the Protestants were to assemble at Paris on this occasion.

Towards that city journeyed, among others, the good old queen of Navarre, the mother of Henry; but on her journey she was taken away from the evil to come. She bore her sickness with great resignation, and left a good testimony of her faith and confidence. "As for this life," she said, "I am in a good measure weaned from the love of it, by reason of the afflictions which have followed me from my youth hitherto; but



especially because I cannot live without daily offending my good God ; with whom I desire to be with all my heart," &c. &c.

One of the principal persons among the Protestants, who at this time visited Paris, was admiral Coligni. He had been brought to a sense of religion by reading the Bible and other books of the Protestants, while a prisoner of war among them, and had afterwards commanded in the Protestant armies. A few days after the death of the queen of Navarre, he was shot at and wounded in the streets of Paris, August 22, 1572. The insidious king, on this occasion, paid him a visit, and told him, " You have received the wound, but it is I who suffer." This conduct of Charles allayed the suspicions of the admiral, though he received many warnings to *make his escape*. The same night a council was held to deliberate on the general massacre of the Protestants. St. Bartholomew's Eve, at midnight, was the time fixed ; — the signal appointed was to be the ringing of a bell near the Louvre, when all the Protestants then in Paris were to be involved in one common destruction. The wounded admiral was apprised of his danger : " I perceive," said he ; " what is doing ;" " I bless God I shall die in the Lord, through whose grace I am elected to a hope of everlasting life." " You, my friends, flee hence as fast as you can." " The presence of God " " is abundantly sufficient for me." His house was attacked among the first. The duke of Guise himself waited below stairs, with the chevalier d'Angoulême, till his murdered body was cast from the window, which was then dragged through the streets and burnt ; and it was said that his head was sent to Rome by the queen mother. In the Louvre, many of the gentlemen belonging to the king of Navarre and the prince of Condé, were killed under the king's eye. He himself is reported to have fired with his long gun at his subjects, when he saw them attempting to escape by the river. Among the slain were count Rochefoucault, Feligni, the admiral's son-in-law, the marquess Ravely, and Peter Ramus, a man celebrated for his great learning ; and of all ranks, it is calculated 6000 were thus murdered in the city of Paris. The young king of Navarre and the prince of Condé were compelled to be present at some of the executions, and also to assist at a jubilee, to thank God for the success of a scheme so favourable to religion.

This massacre was not confined to Paris. Private orders were sent to the governors of the provinces, to fall upon the insurgents, and also to let the people loose upon them ; and similar scenes were exhibited at Meaux, Orleans, Troyes, Angers, Tou-

louse, Rouen, and Lyons ; so that, in the space of two months, 30,000 Protestants were murdered. For these transactions the public joy at Rome was so great, that the pope consecrated the day as a festival, said to be observed in that city to this present time.

In the civil war that followed, we contemplate an awful retribution on the Papists. In one siege alone, 30,000 of them are said to have perished. The king never afterwards appeared to be himself: after the day of the massacre, he had an altered look in his countenance, slept little, never soundly, and awoke frequently in agonies. He died soon after.

Henry III., his brother, succeeded. The war was carried on with indifferent success on the part of the Papists. In 1575, a peace was concluded ; liberty of conscience and eight cautionary towns were given to the Protestants : they were, however, restricted from preaching within two leagues of Paris, or of any other place where the court might be.

But the Guises formed a confederacy, which they called "the Catholic league," and the king was compelled to declare himself its head. Another war commenced, which lasted all his days. The duke of Guise and Henry III. both perished by violent deaths ! The king of Navarre, Henry IV., succeeded in 1588 ; but he had to fight his way to the throne. His final success put an end to these religious wars, as they have been named. He indeed embraced the Roman faith ; but by a famous edict, dated at Nantz, April 13, 1598, he re-established in a most solid and effectual manner the rights and privileges of the reformed. He allowed them free admission to all employments of trust, profit, and honour, and established chambers, in which the members of the two religions were equal, and permitted their children to be educated without restraint in any of the universities.

Such, for the present, was the issue of the religious wars, as they are termed, in the kingdom of France.

We have seen, in noting the escape of Peter Martyr, that Italy itself had been affected by the religious convulsions in Germany. But in this country, the light of the reformation was soon extinguished by the activity of the papal tribunals ; not however without some difficulty, as the records of martyrdom witness.

At Rome, and in other places, many suffered on account of religion. Faninus, a learned layman, endured more than the double pains of death, by being compelled, through fear of it, to

deny the faith, and then, by the excruciating agonies of an uneasy conscience, forced to renounce his recantation. But the afflicted soldier of Christ was more than conqueror in his death, through him that loved him. To his guardian care he felt he could leave his distressed wife and children, and discovered a true fellowship in the sufferings of the Redeemer. When it was observed, "It is strange that you should be cheerful, since the Lord Jesus Christ himself, just before his death, was in an agony, so that his sweat was as great drops of blood falling on the ground," he replied, "Christ sustained pangs and conflicts with hell and death on our account, and thus by his sufferings freed from the fear of these, them who believe in him." Encenas, a Spaniard, was burnt at Rome; as were also Galeacius, Mollius, and Pomponius Algerius. At Venice many suffered, among whom were Sega, Ricetti, and the learned Spinola. Galeacius Carracciolus, marquess of Vico, a Neapolitan, deserted all for Christ, and departed for Geneva; and the names of some other martyrs and confessors might be recorded. Italy was however still doomed to be the abode of darkness.

Even in catholic Spain, some shocks of the distant convulsion were felt. The victims of the Inquisition, counted by thousands, bespeak the apprehension of her tyrants, and discover by what means, for her curse, the light of the reformation was suffered to be suppressed. The intercourse of her kings with Germany, the Netherlands, and England, caused the armies of Spain, and even her learned divines, to take the infection of the new doctrines. There are even some grounds for hope that Charles V. himself, in his retirement after he had abdicated his crowns, had been brought to a better knowledge of the faith which he had persecuted. So far is certain, that the divines who accompanied him in his retreat, were, after his death, seized by the Inquisition; but its dark secrets are not sufficiently explored to ascertain the truth. Cazalla, a chaplain of the emperor, with thirteen others, were burnt at Valladolid; and afterwards, a nobleman with forty others; and some have even supposed that a suspicion of heresy was the cause of the death of the prince Don Carlos, which took place privately, by order of his father Philip. At Seville, many persons suffered, and some of the clerical order as well as of the nobility. The college of St. Isidore, in that city, supplied many noble martyrs and confessors. Many women, some of them of high quality, also suffered. This is sufficient to shew that no small impression was made, even on Spain itself; but, as in Italy, popery remained triumphant, and has long enjoyed the fruits of the bloody victory.

## SECT. V.

## THE EFFECTS OF THE REFORMATION IN THE BRITISH ISLES.

No where were the effects of this convulsion so great and so permanent, as in the kingdoms which now compose the British empire. The shocks were here so violent, that this rich and productive portion of the papal fabric was levelled with the ground. The writings of Luther very soon made their way into England, where they met with many approvers, and were translated into the vernacular tongue for the information of the people. The Lollards, or followers of Wickliff, though not connected by any public bond, were very far from being extinct, as the records of persecution sufficiently discover, and a new impulse was evidently given to that spirit of reform which Wickliff had stirred a hundred and fifty years before. This appears from the quickened jealousy and alarm of the ecclesiastical courts, and papal persecutors. The least whisper of dissent from the doctrines or superstitions of Rome, was visited with the severest penalties ; insomuch that the conviction of having taught their children the Lord's prayer, the ten commandments, and the apostles' creed in the vulgar tongue, was sufficient to establish the charge of heresy, and to bring six men and a woman to the stake, at Coventry, in the year 1519. But these severities were very far from being able to shut out the light which was breaking on the nation from the progress of reformation in Germany, and from the circulation of Luther's writings.

Cardinal Wolsey was now at the height of his favour with the king, and in the character of legate from the Roman see and of prime minister of the king, he united in his person all the authority of church and state, and gave an unusual vigour to the papal authority in England. To oppose the introduction of the Saxon heresy, was an early object of his vigilant government. About the year 1520, being attended by the prelates, and the papal and imperial ambassadors, he proceeded in state to St. Paul's, where Fisher, bishop of Rochester, preached at the cross, and the works of Luther were committed to the flames in the presence of the multitude. But in the present state of men's minds, this pageantry could have had little effect but to awaken still more the spirit of inquiry which was now much abroad.

The new study of humanity, as it was called, or of revived classical literature, had for some time been much cultivated in

England; and, as it exposed the ignorance of the monkish writers, it had prepared the public mind for any innovation of that system which they maintained. Wolsey himself had been a great encourager of learned men, and had even suppressed some of the smaller monasteries, that the revenues of the useless monks might be appropriated to the endowment of schools and colleges. And it is remarkable how many of the scholars patronised by the cardinal for their promising abilities, were afterwards among the most eminent promoters of the reformation. Certainly, this was not what Wolsey intended. As a further antidote against the “pestilent heresy which had spread so rapidly on the continent, and had begun to infect the English nation,” the king himself was brought forward as an antagonist against Luther; and in the year 1521, appeared his book on the Seven Sacraments, as a defence of the Papal superstition. We have already adverted to the reception which the royal treatise met with from Luther; but it is easy to suppose how different would be its estimation in the opinion of the Papists, and at the Court of Rome. The praises of the pope knew no bounds. When he acknowledged the present, and sent to confer the title of ‘Defender of the Faith’ on Henry, he termed it “a certain admirable doctrine, sprinkled with the dew of celestial grace.” “He gave thanks to God, who had vouchsafed to inspire the king’s excellent mind, inclined to every good thing, to write such things for the defence of the holy faith, against the new stirrers of damnable heresies,” &c.<sup>1</sup>

Luther soon had reason to reflect upon the impolicy of the coarse and uncourteous answer which he had returned to the king’s book, and he attempted an apology. But Henry was sufficiently well informed to know, that the contest was not merely a war of words. He stigmatised, in his reply, the doctrines maintained by Luther, respecting justification and free-will, as “subversive of all morality, and repugnant to the first principles of religion.”

Wolsey proceeded, with increased zeal, in his endeavours to prevent the growth of Lutheranism. He issued a commission, dated at his house near Westminster, 14th of May 1521, for a general visitation of the kingdom, wherein he required that the bishops should do their parts, “before those damnable and pestiferous errors and heresies, broached by Luther, took effect in this kingdom, lest they should take root as a noxious briar here; and that by the express will and command of the most potent

<sup>1</sup> Strype’s Memorials, chap. i. p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> Lingard.

and illustrious prince whom the holy father had named ‘ Defender of the Faith.’ This commission contained a list of Luther’s errors, which was commanded to be fixed on the doors of all the churches throughout the kingdom, that all persons might read and avoid them !” The King also sent, 1523, a solemn embassy to Ferdinand of Austria, the emperor’s brother, with the insignia of the Garter, “ highly to commend his zeal against the detestable and damnable heresies of Friar Martin Luther<sup>1</sup>.”

About this time, the cardinal was called upon to exercise his authority to correct the manners of the clergy. Complaints were every where made of their extortions, and of their corrupt and loose lives. Fox, the old bishop of Winchester, exhorts him in a letter to this pious work, which is a sufficient proof that these complaints did not arise merely from the censorious zeal of the reformers. He tells the cardinal, that by diligent investigation “ He had come to know, which he could not so much as have thought before, that all that belonged to the ancient integrity of the clergy, and especially of the monks, was so depraved by licences and corruptions, and by the malignancy and length of time, quite abolished ;” “ that he despaired of seeing in his days ‘ a perfect and absolute reformation.’ ” “ That no more good came from this commendable purpose—to reform the ignorance and vices of the priests and monks, may, probably,” observes Mr. Strype, “ be attributed to their craft in diverting this reformation from themselves, towards those who favoured Luther and his opinions<sup>2</sup>.”

The principles of the reformation, notwithstanding the cardinal’s vigilance, had, by this time, made considerable progress in England. Colchester and the coast of Essex seem very evidently pointed out in the original documents, as the most frequent line of communication. The city of London, and the two Universities, harboured many who favoured the “ new learning,” as it was called. These all went at this period by the name of Lutherans, though many of them differed from him on the doctrine of the Eucharist. Among these early reformers began now to be famous, for their abundant labours, William Tindal, John Fryth, and Thomas Bilney.

Tindal has been justly honoured with the title of “ The apostle of England ;” and to him, perhaps, more than to any other individual, are these kingdoms indebted, under God, for the first light of the reformation. He was a clergyman who had

<sup>1</sup> Strype.

<sup>2</sup> Memorials, 74.



studied in both Universities, and had long attracted notice by his avowed attachment to the new opinions. The great work which he projected for the benefit of his country, was, in imitation of what Luther had done in Germany, to TRANSLATE THE SCRIPTURES into the English Tongue<sup>1</sup>. Finding no conveniency for the performance of this blessed task in England, he retired into Germany, at first into Saxony, where he conversed with Luther; afterwards he resided at Antwerp, and there published a translation of the New Testament about the year 1527. He next began with the Old Testament, and finished off the five books of Moses, writing prologues to each, as he had done to the books of the New Testament. “The books of William Tindal,” says Fox, “being compiled, published, and sent over into Britain, it cannot be spoken what a door of light was opened to the whole English nation, which was before many years in darkness.” Tindal’s translation of the Scriptures also reached Scotland with his other books. “One copy of the Bible or of the New Testament, supplied several families. At the dead hour of night, while others were asleep, they assembled in one house. The sacred volume was brought from its concealment; and while one read, the rest listened with mute attention. In this way the knowledge of the Scriptures was diffused, at a period when it doth not appear that there were any public preachers of the truth in Scotland<sup>2</sup>.”

Miles Coverdale, afterwards the first protestant bishop of Exeter, assisted Tindal in these labours abroad. He, for some time, occupied the office of chaplain to the English merchants at Antwerp, till at length, by the procurement of the popish prelates in England, he was seized by the emperor’s authority; and after lying some time in prison, in virtue of the decree of the diet of

<sup>1</sup> We have a curious document to shew that Wickliff’s translation of the scriptures, though in a measure antiquated by the change which the language had undergone, was still in partial circulation: “John Tyball, a Lollard, in his confession before the bishop of London, taken in the year 1528, states, ‘The sayd Thomas Hilles and this respondent shewyd the frear Barons’ — one of the secret circulators of Tindal’s works — ‘of certayn old bookes that they had: as of iiij Evangelistes, and certayn epistles of Peter and Paule in Englishe; which bookes the sayd frear dyd litle regard, and made a twyte of it, and sayd, a poynt for them, for they be not to be regarded toward the new printed Testament in Englishe; for it is of more cleyner Englishe. And then the sayd frear Barons delyverid to them the sayd New Testament in Englishe; for which they payd iijs. ijd., and desyred them that they wold kepe yt close,” &c.—  
STRYPE’S Mem. Appendix. No. xvii.

<sup>2</sup> M’Crie’s Life of Knox.



Augsburg, this eminent servant of Christ was strangled at the stake, and his body afterwards consumed with fire. When led to execution, he prayed aloud: "Lord, open the eyes of the king of England!"

John Fryth, the friend and coadjutor of Tindal, had, by his means, been brought to the knowledge of the truth. He was of Cambridge, and on account of his great learning had been selected by Cardinal Wolsey for the new college, which he had founded with such magnificence at Oxford. At this place, Fryth, and others of the students, suffered very severe treatment from falling under the suspicion of heresy. He, at length, escaped beyond the seas; but soon returned secretly to England. After many sufferings, he was at last apprehended by the vigilance of the Lord Chancellor, Sir Thomas Moore, and committed to the Tower, where he lay for several years. Tindal wrote to him in his prison, and encouraged him with very suitable exhortations. "Two have suffered in Antwerp, in the day of the Holy Cross, unto the great glory of the Gospel; four at Rysch, in Flanders; and at Inkehoth, there one at least suffered, and all the same day. At Rouen, in France, they persecute; and at Paris, are five doctors taken for the gospel. See, you are not alone; be cheerful, and remember that among the hard-hearted in England, there is a number reserved by grace, for whose sakes, if need be, you must be ready to suffer. Sir, if you may write, how short soever it may be, forget it not, that we may know how it goeth with you for our hearts' ease. The Lord be with you yet again with all his plenteousness, and fill you that you may flow over." Bilney was also of Cambridge, and had early embraced the reformation. He had been blessed as the instrument to bring others to the knowledge of Christ, and among them the afterwards celebrated Hugh Latimer. When he was apprehended by the cardinal's orders and brought before him, Bilney at first was overcome, and was brought to make a public recantation in St. Paul's church; but he was again brought back, by the most heartfelt penitence, to the confession of the truth, and was faithful unto death. His severe grief for his fall, and his recovery, are strikingly described by bishop Latimer, in a sermon preached before king Edward: "I knew a man, Bilney, little Bilney, that blessed martyr of God, what time he had borne his faggot and was come again to Christ, had such conflicts within himself, beholding the image of death, that his friends were afraid to let him be alone, and would fain to be with him day and night, and comfort him, if they could,

but no comforts would serve; and as for the places of Scripture, to bring them unto him, was like as if a man would run him through with a sword. However, he was revived, and took his death patiently against the tyrannical see of Rome<sup>1</sup>." "God gave him such strength and perfectness of faith, that he boldly confessed his faith in the gospel of our Saviour Christ; and also suffered his body to be burnt for that same gospel which we now preach in England<sup>2</sup>." He suffered in the year 1531, under Nix, bishop of Norwich, a prelate infamous for his persecuting zeal.

To the names of Tindal, Fryth, and Bilney, may be added that of Dr. Barnes, prior and master of the house of the Augustines in Cambridge, who owed to Bilney his instructions in the gospel of Christ. He was soon accused of heresy; but numbers belonging to the university flocked around him, and openly espoused his sentiments. The place where they assembled for religious exercises was, in contempt, called "Germany." The consequence was, an order and messenger from the cardinal for the arrest of Dr. Barnes, and for a search to be made suddenly for Luther's works, and all German books. Barnes's courage also failed him before the cardinal; but he too, like Bilney, was restored, and afterwards suffered martyrdom. Fox also mentions Thomas Hitton of Maidstone, who was burnt in that town in the year 1530, "for the constant and manifest testimony of Jesus Christ and of his free grace and salvation." He also records the martyrdom of Tewksbury, a tradesman of London, of James Bainham, and of Thomas Benet, burnt at Exeter; and numbers, he observes, would be found, could all the registers of the kingdom be searched, both of men and women, who were brought to the fire, or compelled to abjure; and Mr. Strype, in his Memorials of the Reformation, has given some very interesting extracts from the register of the diocese of London. "Heresy," he observes, "as it was then called, that is, the gospel, had already spread considerably in this diocese of London, and especially about Colchester and other parts of Essex, as well as in the city. The New Testament in English, translated by Hotchyn (that is Tindal,) was in many hands, and was read with great application and joy. The doctrines of the corporeal presence, of worshipping images, and going on pilgrimages

<sup>1</sup> Serm. vii.<sup>2</sup> Serm. vii.

to saints, were rejected; and they had secret meetings wherein they instructed one another out of God's word."

From all these documents, preserved by Mr. Strype, it appears that the translations and writings of Tindal had a very great influence in the revival of the Gospel in England. We learn also from the writings of this blessed martyr which are extant, and from the writings of his companions, that England had received a very full manifestation of Gospel truth, equal in distinctness and brightness to any that had been vouchsafed to the most favoured reformers on the Continent<sup>1</sup>. Tindal thus states the order of man's salvation. - "So goeth it with God's elect. God chooseth them first, and not they God, as thou readest, John xv. And then he sendeth forth and calleth them, and sheweth them his good will which he beareth unto them, and maketh them see both their own damnation in the law, and also the mercy that is laid up for them in Christ's blood, and thereto what he will have them to do; and then when we see his mercy, we love him again, and please him and submit ourselves to his laws to walk in them; for when we err not in wit, reason, and judgment of things, we cannot err in will and in choice of things. The choice of a man's will doth naturally and of her own accord, follow the judgment of a man's reason, whether he judge right or wrong: so that in teaching only *riseth the pith of a man's living*. Howbeit there are swine that receive no learning but to defile it; and there are those that rend all good learning with their teeth; and these are pope-holy, which following a righteousness of their own feigning, resist the righteousness of God in Christ." "God giveth me light to see the goodness and righteousness of the law, and mine own sin and unrighteousness; from which knowledge springeth repentance. Now repentance sheweth me not that the law is good and I evil, but this is a light which the Spirit of God hath given me, out of which light repentance springeth: then the same Spirit worketh in my heart trust and confidence to believe the mercy of God and his truth, that he will do as he has promised; which belief saveth me. And immediately out of that trust springeth love towards the law of God again; and whatsoever a man worketh by any other love than this, it pleaseth not God, nor is that love godly." "Now love doth not receive

<sup>1</sup> See the Edition of the Works of Tindal, Fryth, and Barnes; printed by John Daye, London, 1573.

this mercy, but faith only, out of which faith love springeth; by which love I pour out again upon my neighbour that goodness which I have received of God by faith. Hereof you see that I cannot be justified without repentance, and yet repentance justifieth me not; and hereof you see that I cannot have a faith to be justified and saved, except love spring thereof immediately: and yet love justifieth me not before God."

"Christ standeth us in double stead, and serveth us two manner of ways. First, he is our Redeemer, Deliverer, Reconciler, Mediator, Intercessor, Advocate, Attorney, Solicitor; our hope, comfort, shield, protection, defender, strength, health, satisfaction, and salvation; his blood, his death—all that he ever did, is ours: and Christ himself, with all that he is or can do, is ours. His blood-shedding, and all that he did, doth me as good service as though I myself had done it; and God (as great as he is) is mine with all that he hath, as a husband is his wife's, through Christ and his purchasing. Secondly, after that we be overcome with love and kindness, and now seek to do the will of God (which is a Christian man's nature), then have we Christ an example to counterfeit." "Whatsoever, therefore, faith hath received of God through Christ's blood and deserving; that same must love shed out every whit, and bestow on our neighbours unto their profit, yea, and that though they be our enemies. By faith we receive of God, and by love we shed out again; and that must we do freely, after the example of Christ, without any other respects than our neighbour's weal only, and neither look for reward in earth nor yet in heaven for the deserving and merit of our deeds—as friars preach, though we know that good deeds are rewarded both in this life and in the life to come," &c. "If my merits obtained me heaven, or a higher place in heaven, then had I whereof I might rejoice besides the Lord." "Though the elect of God cannot so fall that they rise not again, because that the mercy of God ever waiteth upon them to deliver them from evil"—"yet they forget themselves oftentimes, and sink down into trances, and fall asleep in lusts for a season; but as soon as they are awaked, they repent and come again without resistance. God now and then withdraweth his hand, and leaveth them unto their own strength, to make them feel that there is no power to do good but of God only, lest they should be proud of that which is none of theirs."

I cannot but regret that the nature of this work forbids longer extracts from this "apostle of Christ to England." In doctrinal and experimental knowledge of the Christian system, he may

certainly be ranked among the very first of the reformers; and the works of Tindal give us a very pleasing view of the Gospel in his time taught in this kingdom, before it walked on the high places of the land. With respect to the sacramental controversy, Tindal sided with the Helvetians. In politics, he taught—as befitting a follower of Christ—the non-resistance of the Saxon reformer; not in flattery to the ruling powers, but in submission to the ordinance of God, and in reliance upon a special Providence ruling over the kings of the earth<sup>1</sup>.

Sir Thomas More, the pride of the Roman Church, appeared as the antagonist of Tindal; but as the heretic's books were prohibited, this conscientious papist first obtained a license from the bishop to read and have them in his possession. "He wrote," says Burnet, "according to the way of the age, with much bitterness; and though he had been no friend to the monks, and a great declaimer against the ignorance of the clergy, and had been ill-used by the cardinal, yet he was one of the bitterest enemies of the new preachers, and not without great cruelty when he came into power<sup>2</sup>."

The party of English reformers were now become very considerable in many districts of the kingdom, especially in the more southern counties. In London, and in both the universities, there were known to be societies of them, and "the people magnified them." The persecutions which they suffered from the Roman clergy, made them an object, not only of pity, but of veneration; and, with other causes, contributed much to render the popish bishops unpopular, and the objects of the public odium; and that, at a very critical period, when many, envious of their overgrown wealth, and destitute of all respect for their persons and office, waited only for an opportunity to share the spoils of the church. Great numbers, it is to be feared, favoured the Reformation wholly with this sacrilegious intent.

Tindal, in a letter to Frith while he lay in the Tower, remarks: "I guessed long ago that God would send a dazing into the head of the spirituality, to catch themselves in their own subtlety, and I trust it is come to pass. And now methinketh I smell

<sup>1</sup> The author of a late publication, "The Book of the Church," calls the doctrines of Tindal "Fatalism." Is there no distinction between the notions of pagan philosophy, distinguished by this term, and what Luther, Calvin, Bucer, Cranmer, and all the metropolitans of the Church of England till the time of archbishop Laud, taught as revealed in Scripture, respecting "the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God?"

<sup>2</sup> Hist. Ref. b. i. p. 32.

a counsel to be taken, little for their profits in time to come : but you must understand that it is not of a pure heart and for the love of the truth, but to avenge themselves, and to ' eat the whore's flesh,' and to suck the marrow of her bones. Wherefore cleave fast to the rock of the help of God, and commit the end of all things to him ; and if God shall call you, that you may then use the wisdom of the worldly, as far as you perceive the glory of God may come thereof, refuse it not ; *and ever among thrust in, that the Scriptures may be in the mother tongue,* and learning set up in the universities. But and if aught be required contrary to the glory of God and of his Christ, then stand fast and commit yourself to God, and be not overcome of men's persuasions, which haply shall say, We see no other way to bring in the truth."

This letter of Tindal is dated in January 1533. Within the three last years prodigious alterations had taken place in the counsels of Henry VIII., which, if they opened as yet no fair prospects of deliverance to the persecuted reformers, had done much for the overthrow of the papal power in England. Wolsey had fallen from his elevated station ; and though Sir Thomas More, their enemy, had received the seals, and had been very urgent with the king to put the laws against heretics in force, and had indeed revived the persecution which had languished in the latter days of Wolsey's power, the king, notwithstanding, had listened to counsels most hostile to the Roman church, and had taken many considerable steps towards the abolition of the usurped authority of the bishop of Rome in his dominions.

The occasion of these measures is well known, and occupies a large portion in the secular history of these times. Henry had married the widow of his deceased brother : this, by the Levitical law, which had been received as the law of Christendom respecting marriage, was illegal. But the popes had arrogated to themselves the power of changing these laws by their dispensation. Some limits, indeed, the more conscientious ascribed to this authority ; but, as God himself had enjoined among the Jews the marriage of the widow of a brother who had died childless, it was contended that his vicar upon earth might grant the same privilege to the Christians ; and though some, at the same time, had made objections to the validity of this dispensation, the king, for more than twenty years, had lived with the princess Catharine, as his acknowledged wife and queen ; but he now felt, or pretended to feel, a troubled conscience—that he was living in incest.

The question itself did certainly divide in opinion the casuists,



both among the Romanists and the Reformers; but the character of the king, and his avowed attachment to Anne Boleyn, have not generally gained him much credit for tenderness of conscience. The pope's conscience in the question, Whether the king's marriage should or should not be annulled—is even less plausible than the king's. He was willing to gratify his wishes, rather than hazard, at this critical era, the obedience of the King of England; but, if he granted the divorce, he must brave the enmity of the emperor, which still more nearly affected his personal interests, as well as the interests of his see. This led, on the part of the court of Rome, to measures of prevarication, which for some time amused the king, but at last highly exasperated his proud and vindictive spirit. Religion he had none; and his superstitious veneration for the faith, of which he so lately boasted himself “the defender,” was not sufficient to stand against the fury of his passions. There is no proof that the object of the king's attachment, Anne Boleyn, ever seriously embraced the Protestant faith. It is evident that her reliance for forwarding the business of the divorce and her marriage with the king, was much placed on the zeal and abilities of Wolsey<sup>1</sup>, who, to promote the king's wishes, as well as from political motives, was certainly in earnest in his endeavours; but they, failing of success, had caused his sincerity to be suspected. And when the pope, in the year 1529, had recalled the commission which sat in England, and had revoked the cause before himself at Rome, Anne must have seen the papal authority arrayed against her hopes; and this was sufficient to induce her to wish the king would follow the example of those princes who had already set that authority at defiance.

This seems illustrated by a circumstance which happened at this time, and which Mr. Strype has recorded in his *Memorials*; and though trifling in itself, it might have had a great influence on the mind of Henry. The lady Anne had given to one of her attendants a book of Tindal's to read, which was stolen from her by a young gentleman of the name of Zouch, her admirer. Zouch was so struck with the contents of the book, and was so perpetually reading it, that he attracted the notice of Dr. Sampson, the dean of the king's chapel, who, it appears, had recently received a special direction from the cardinal, “to have a vigilant eye over all people for such books that they came not abroad; that so, as much as might be, they might not come to

<sup>1</sup> See her Letters to the Cardinal, in Strype.



the king's reading." The dean, in consequence of these orders, snatched the book out of Zouch's hands, and seeing what it was, carried it to Wolsey. In the mean time, the lady Anne asked her woman for the book; she, on her knees, told all the circumstances. Anne shewed herself not sorry nor angry with either of the two; but said, "Well, it shall be the dearest book that ever the dean or cardinal took away!" By the interposition of the king, the book was restored to her; and now, bringing the book to him, she besought his grace most tenderly to read it. The king did so, and delighted in the book, "For," saith he, "this book is for me and all kings to read." The book was one which Tindal had published the year before, on "the Obedience of a Christian Man." It contained doctrines which the king most certainly never embraced; but the doctrine of passive obedience to the sovereign for conscience' sake, and that not only to the good and gentle master, but also to the froward, which Tindal taught from the 13th chapter of St. Paul's epistle to the Romans, and the emancipation from papal tyranny which it proposed, seemed to fall in well with the king's inclinations.

Anne appears on other occasions to have employed this method of undermining the credit of her enemies the papists, with the king. We read of her putting into his hands, not long after, a work against the doctrine of Purgatory, called "The Beggars' Supplications," written in so witty and taking a manner, that the king was much pleased with it, and would never suffer any thing to be done to the author. It affected to tax the pope with covetousness, because, having the power, he did not deliver all out of purgatory; and that none but the rich, who paid well for it, could be discharged out of this prison.

The lord chancellor More undertook to answer "the Supplication of the Beggars." He wrote another "Supplication of the Souls in Purgatory," with that pathetic eloquence for which he was eminent, introducing every one's ancestors and departed friends relieved from great misery by the masses for the dead, and beseeching them to befriend the poor friars, now that they had so many enemies. John Frith, from his prison in the tower, wrote an answer to More's Supplication, and against the Dialogues of bishop Fisher on the same subject. The great argument of the papists for purgatory, was built upon the defectiveness of our repentance in this life; hence was argued the existence of a future state for the further purification of the soul:—and who could rely, in a dying hour, upon the perfection of his repentance? To disperse this error of darkness, Frith applied the light of Gospel

truth, " that the sins of the Christian believer were not pardoned for his repentance, or perfection thereof, but only for the merits and sufferings of Christ ;" " and sin once pardoned, it could not be further punished." He shewed the difference between the Christian's sufferings in this life, and the pretended punishments of purgatory : " the one were medicinal corrections, for reforming us more and more, or for giving warning to others ; the other are terrible punishments, without any of these ends ; therefore, the one might well consist with the free pardon of sin, the other could not." The chancellor had gloried over the new preachers, that they could only prevail over simple tradesmen, women, and illiterate persons. Frith's answer was ready, from the nature of the progress that the Gospel made in the days of Christ and his apostles<sup>1</sup>.

On the fall of Wolsey, which almost immediately followed the failure of the divorce, a parliament (which had not sat for seven years) was summoned, and met on the 3d of November. It appeared very evidently, from what passed in this assembly, that the king might depend on the concurrence of the great body of the nation in whatever measures he might think proper to pursue against the papal authority. In the bills sent up by the commons, were several enactments concerning the abuses of the clergy—exactions for the probate of wills—concerning mortuaries—plurality of benefices—non-residence—and churchmen being farmers of land, and engaging in other secular employments ; and some severe reflections were made on the vices and corruptions of the clergy, " which," says Burnet, " were believed to flow from men that favoured Luther's doctrine in their hearts." When these bills were brought up to the house of lords, Fisher, bishop of Rochester, in opposing them, cast reflections upon the house of commons—that they were resolved to bring down the church. He bid them look to the miserable state into which Bohemia was reduced by heresy, and ended with saying—" that all this was for lack of faith." The commons, by their speaker, complained to the king of what the bishop had said, " that their acts flowed from their want of faith ;" which was a high imputation on the whole nation when the representatives of the commons were so charged, as if they had been infidels and heathens. Fisher excused himself by saying, " that he meant the kingdom of Bohemia."

The spiritual lords made a strong opposition to the bills in

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xi. 25.

the house; but the lords temporal were as strenuous for their adoption: the bills were agreed upon, and received the royal assent<sup>1</sup>. This session of parliament evidently shews the British nation in a state of hostility to the papal clergy.

The events of this year also first brought to the acquaintance of the king, Dr. Cranmer, whom he afterwards raised to the see of Canterbury. He was descended from an ancient family in Nottinghamshire, and had so distinguished himself for his learning in the university of Cambridge, that he had the offer of a situation in the cardinal's new college at Oxford. This he refused, and continued at Cambridge, and was a divinity lecturer in his College of Jesus. Fox and Gardiner, the one the king's almoner, and the other his secretary, had accidentally fallen into company with Dr. Cranmer, when "the weighty affair" of the king's divorce occupied their attention, and was a subject of their discourse. Cranmer gave it as his opinion, that they had taken a wrong course to apply to the court of Rome. He said, "There is but one truth in it, which no men ought or can better discuss than the divines, whose opinions may be soon known." The conversation was reported to the king, who would have Cranmer sent for immediately. His sentiments on the invalidity of the king's marriage, appear to have been his first recommendation; but Henry was ever afterwards much attached to Cranmer, as appears in the subsequent transactions of this reign; and meaning to employ him in the scheme he had proposed, of collecting the different opinions of divines as to the meaning of the sacred text, he fixed him for the present in the family of the earl of Wiltshire, the father of Anne Boleyn.

The commons also, in the same parliament, sent up a bill complaining of the provincial institutions of the clergy, as contrary to the royal prerogative, and burdensome to the subject; for the clergy claimed a power of making laws in their convocations binding upon the laity, though they had no representation in those assemblies. The clergy now found themselves obliged to yield up these usurped powers, but with evident reluctance.

In their defence, they, with great address, refer to "his highness's own book, most excellently written, against Martin Luther, for the defence of the Catholic faith and Christ's church." But this address neither satisfied the king nor the commons, and the clergy were obliged to submit. It had been declared, as a point of law, that all the clergy had been guilty of a *premunire* in submitting to the legatine powers of cardinal Wolsey, and lay

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 1529.

at the king's mercy. This was certainly a hard case, when the king had himself given consent to the exercise of these legatine powers; but it was held to be contrary to the laws of the realm, with which the royal authority could not legally dispense, though it might pardon their breach, and the king did not scruple to make the submission of the clergy part of the price of the royal pardon.

Under the same legal embarrassments, the clergy were compelled to reject the pope's power in England, and to acknowledge the king as supreme head and governor in all causes, ecclesiastical as well as civil. The king's title was proposed to run, "The Protector and Supreme Head of the Church and Clergy of England." The archbishop (Warham) said, that silence was to be taken for consent: they cried out, "We are all silent."

The clergy in the province of York ventured to remonstrate against the title of Supreme Head of the Church. They observe, in a letter to the king, that "Christ was head of the Church; and he divided his power after the distinction of temporals and spirituals; whereof the one he committed to princes, and the other to priests." The king replied, that the places of Scripture which they used to prove this, served only to prove obedience due to princes by all men without distinction; whereof are priests and bishops, as well as laymen, who make together the church; and that although *they* restrained obedience to princes in regard of temporal things only, yet "obey" and "be subject," contained no such matter in them whereby spiritual things should be excluded.

The convocation of York next proved, by certain passages of Scripture, that the administration of spiritual things was communicated by Christ to priests,—as, to preach and administer the sacraments. "This," the king replied, "no man would deny; but that it proved not their persons, acts, and deeds, not to be under the power of their prince<sup>1</sup>." The remonstrance was not persisted in, and the northern clergy followed at length the example of the province of Canterbury<sup>2</sup>."

Much had been effected by these measures, to set the royal au-

<sup>1</sup> Strype.

<sup>2</sup> We find in Fox this dialogue between archbishop Cranmer and the popish doctors, when he was examined before them in the days of queen Mary.

*Doctor.* Who is the supreme head of the church of England?

*Cranmer.* Marry, Christ is the head of this member, as of the whole body of the universal church.

*Doctor.* Why, you made king Henry VIII. the supreme head of the church.

*Cranmer.* Yea, of all the people of England, ecclesiastical as well as civil.

thority above that of the clergy and the pope; but it does not appear that the least change was at this time projected by the king and his counsellors, in any part of the system of papal Christianity. It was now indeed thought feasible doctrine, that the text, Matt. xvi. "Whatsoever ye shall bind," &c. gave authority to all the apostles jointly to make laws, and keep councils, until such time that a convenient number of lay people were converted to the faith, and then that text ceased, and the text of Matt. xviii. did take effect, and that text being spoken to all the church, as well as to the apostles, gave power to the whole church to make laws, and restrained the peculiar authority of the apostles in that behalf. The king in parliament was accordingly considered as representing the visible church of England; but saving the recovery of this authority, which, it was insisted, was no more than kingdoms and states had formerly exercised, they meditated no alteration in the superstitions which Rome had taught them, and far less any change in the essential doctrines of the faith.

In the year 1532, the parliament still continued their complaints against the clergy; and it appeared, very manifestly, that, from the state of the public feeling against them, this once formidable body must now depend entirely on the king's protection against the multitude of their enemies; and this will account for the ease with which the king, in the subsequent part of his reign, carried the most violent measures; and explains why so little resistance could be made by those whose wealth and immunities were the objects of spoil.

On an address from the convocation, an act was passed forbidding the payment of the first fruit of benefices to the pope; at least leaving it to the king to settle what portion of the same should be remitted to the pope. This he was to declare by his letters patent before Easter, or before the next session of parliament. And it was enacted, that if the pope refused to send the bulls of consecration to bishoprics, it should be lawful for the archbishops of the provinces, notwithstanding, to consecrate; or in the case of an archbishop, for two bishops of the kingdom, appointed by

*Doctor.* And not of the church?

*Cranmer.* No: for Christ is the only head of the church and of the faith and religion of the same: the king is head and governor of his people, which is the visible church.

*Doctor.* What! you never durst tell the king so?

*Cranmer.* Yea, that I durst, and did, on the publication of his title, wherein he was named supreme head of the church; there was never other thing meant.

the royal authority; and notwithstanding any censures or excommunications of the pope, "the king should cause the sacraments and other rites of the church to be administered, and that none of these censures might be published or executed." The bill received the royal assent, but waited for its full confirmation, according to the provision of the act, for the declaration of the letters patent, which were not issued till the 9th of July. Thus were laid the foundations of the independence of the English church.

This act of the English parliament caused a great sensation at Rome, where the king's ambassadors were still prosecuting the divorce, not without some hopes of success. The pope expostulated with them concerning this act. He was told the act was still in the king's power; and, unless he was provoked, he did not intend to put it in execution. Henry himself also, in his despatches, had said, "He intended not to impugn the pope's authority further, except he compelled him; and what he did, was only to bring it within its first and ancient bounds, to which it was better to reduce it than to let it alway run headlong and do amiss." These arguments would have been sufficient; but the emperor's influence at the court of Rome was too preponderating to leave its council free.

On the 14th of November, Henry was married to Anne Boleyn. The king and his friends had persuaded themselves, that the former marriage had ever been null and void, and that, therefore, no declarative sentence was necessary. A protest was made against the citation of the king to Rome, since he was a sovereign prince, and the church of England a free church, over which the pope had no just authority.

The king, however, was not yet resolved to cast off the papal authority entirely; for on his determination to promote Cranmer to the see of Canterbury, he directed that he should receive the usual bulls from Rome. Cranmer had objections against the oath of canonical obedience to the pope, as contrary to the oath he must take to the king. According to the bad casuistry of the times, however, he took it, with a protest which limited its meaning,—“that he did not admit the pope's authority any further than it agreed with the express Word of God; and that it might be lawful at all times to speak against him, and impugn his error, when there should be occasion.”

In a session of parliament held on the 4th of February, an act had been passed against all appeals to Rome. The preamble states, "that the crown of England is imperial, and that



the nation is a complete body within itself, with a full power to give justice in all cases, spiritual as well as temporal."

By the authority, therefore, of ecclesiastical tribunals in England, the questions respecting the king's marriages were settled. Still, however, we observe, that when the pope annulled these proceedings, both the king and the archbishop appeal from the pope to a general council; so that we discover no intention as yet in Henry's government to separate from the Roman catholic church. But from the opinions now promulged and encouraged in England, it may justly be doubted whether any concessions of Clement could have saved the papal authority in this kingdom<sup>1</sup>. In the king's vindication to his people, published or intended to be published, in this year, 1533, the king is said to "have been most wrongfully judged by the "GREAT IDOL" and most cruel enemy to Christ's law and his religion, which calleth himself pope; and his (the king's) most just and lawful provocation and appellation from the said enemy of Christ's laws, to the general council made, also refused, denied and forsaken." "By holy Scripture," it is declared, "there is none authority nor jurisdiction granted more to the bishop of Rome than to any other bishop *extra provinciam*; yet, because that sufferance of people and blindness of princes, with their supportation hitherto, hath sustained the same," it is now necessary to open the same to the people; "to the intent they should no longer be disseyved, in honouring him as an IDOL, which is but a man, usurping God's power and authority."

"The pope," says Mr. Strype, "was now reckoned among many to be antichrist, and the king was the more willing to fix this upon him, that he might the better vindicate his casting off the pope's authority and his preparing against all danger from the pope and his supporters. And especial provision was also made for supplying the pulpit at St. Paul's Cross in London with proper preachers. Though no resistance could be made on their parts, it was well known that the greater part of the bishops and clergy were at this time advocates for the pope's authority; and itinerant preachers were by them secretly sent round the kingdom, to counteract the preachers of "the new learning," and these measures of government, which seemed so favourable to their cause.

What doctrines those reformers were at this period preaching in England, who were of the school of Tindal and Frith, we learn satisfactorily from their works. With respect to those divines, afterwards such instruments of good to this nation, of

<sup>1</sup> Lingard.



whom archbishop Cranmer may be considered as the head, it does not appear so plain how much of the papal system they had at this time renounced. We find, in the Memorials, that the famous Latimer, then a popular preacher in the West of England, and in the town of Bristol, and who was a great annoyance to the papists, vindicates himself from having denied that the Virgin or the other saints ought to be worshipped, or were mediators for us with God; neither did he deny them altogether; he only preferred to them works of mercy: the great offence he had given, was by his bold declamations against the vices of the clergy.

In the year 1534, still further progress was made in the abolition of the papal authority by the legislature. They seemed to acknowledge the Holy Scripture as the only authority, as to what things were necessary to salvation. At the same time, it is ambiguously said, "they do not mean to vary from the Catholic faith of Christendom."

None were to be "troubled upon any of the pope's canons or laws, or for speaking or doing against them;" but the statutes of Richard II. and Henry V. were still suffered to be enforced, and heretics found guilty, and refusing to abjure, were still adjudged to the cruel death of being burnt alive, and it remained to be seen what the government would understand to be heresy against the Catholic faith. Thus there remained in the hand of the tyrant a dreadful scourge for the reformers.

At the same time it was enacted, that an oath, which no conscientious papist could take, in approbation of the late measures, should be taken by all persons, under penalty of misprision of treason. Most of the papistical party, however, did take the oath; but Sir Thomas More and bishop Fisher chose rather to suffer for conscience' sake, and were thrown into prison, where they endured privations most disgraceful to the king's government. Both these great men had indeed been persecutors of the reformers; and it is some consolation to learn that this retaliation came not from their hands. The archbishop, whatever his religious views were at this time, is known to have given his advice against these proceedings. With respect to Secretary Cromwell, his religious faith is more than doubtful, although his rise in the king's favour greatly aided the reformation.

With Sir Thomas More and bishop Fisher, suffered some of the friars of the Charter-house; and the penalties of treason were inflicted upon them in their execution, with cruel severity. At the same time, the more cruel laws against heretics were to be carried into force. Gardiner is said to have been the author

of this counsel, "that the king might convince the world that though the new preacher had been much emboldened by the late measures, he was still a good Catholic king<sup>1</sup>."

John Frith was an early victim of this state policy. He had been committed by Sir Thomas More, as we have seen, while chancellor, chiefly for some writings of his, which were drawn from him, against the doctrine of the corporeal presence in the Lord's supper. The chancellor was not content with throwing him into prison, but wrote against him in a very contemptuous style; and Frith, from his prison — "so loaded with irons that he could scarce sit upright," — wrote an answer to More's work. Frith seems to have been the first of the reformers who was publicly called in question for the true doctrine of the sacrament, in England<sup>2</sup>. It was considered among them as a delicate question at this time, on account of the divisions it had created between the Lutherans and the other reformers. Tindal wrote to Frith, when in the Tower, some very sensible and truly charitable observations on this subject. He addresses him under the name of Jacob. "Deerely beloved brother Jacob, mine hart's desire in our Saviour Christ is, that ye may carry your-selfe with patience, and be cold, sober, wise, circumspect, and that you keep you alowe by the ground, avoiding his questions that passe the common capacite. But expound the law truly, and open the vaile of Moses to condemn all fleshe, and proove all men sinners, and all deedes under the law, before mercy have taken away the condemnation thereof, to bee sinne and damnable: and then as a faithfull minister, set abroach the mercie of our Lord Jesus, and let the wounded consciences drinke of the water of him. And then — shall your preaching be with power, and not as the doctrine of the hypocrites; and the Spirit of God shall worke with you, and all consciences shall beare record unto you, and feel that it is so. And all doctrine that easteth a miste on these, to shadow and hide them — I meane the law of God and the Gospel of Christ — that resist you with all your power. Of the presence of Christ's body in the Sacrament, meddle as little as you can, that there appeare no division among us. Barnes — is hote against you. The Saxons be sore on the affirmative, whether constant or obstinate, I remit it to God. Philip Melancthon, — if the Frenchmen receive the Word of God, will plant the affirmative in them: George Joy would have put forth a treatise of that matter, but I

<sup>1</sup> Barnet.

<sup>2</sup> Fox.

have stopt him as yet." " My mind is, that nothing be put forth till we heare how you shall have sped. I would have the right use preached, and the presence to be an indifferent thing, till the matter might be reasoned at peace, at pleasure of both parties. If you be required, shew the phrases of the Scripture, and let them talke what they will. For, as to believe that God is everie where, hurteth no man that worshippeth no where but within the heart, in spirit and in veritie ; even so, to believe that the bodie of Christ is every where, (though it cannot bee proved,) hurteth no man that worshippeth him no where save in the faith of his Gospell. You perceive my mind: howbeit, if God shew you otherwise, it is free for you to do as he mooveth you."

Frith seemed to have imbibed the spirit of his elder adviser; for after having very ably stated the arguments for the figurative sense of the words, " This is my body," &c., and having stated the uses of the sacrament, he says, " To all these ends, the corporeal presence of Christ availeth nothing, they being sufficiently answered by the mystical presence." Yet he draws another conclusion from these premises than that the belief of the corporeal presence in the sacrament was no necessary article of our faith. It was on the right use of the sacrament that he laid the great stress. " The German divines," he says, " believed a corporeal presence ; but since that was merely an opinion that rested in their minds, and did not carry along with it any corruption of worship or idolatrous practice, it was to be borne with, and the peace of the church was not to be broken for it; but the case of the church of Rome was very different, which had set up gross idolatry, building it upon this doctrine."

Archbishop Cranmer afterwards acknowledged that this work of Frith had afforded him great light in this matter<sup>1</sup>. When these convictions arose in his mind, will be a matter for future inquiry; but it fell to him to summon Frith before him. The king had taken offence at the prisoner's being kept so long in the Tower without examination; and Cranmer was joined in a commission, with other bishops and noblemen, to conduct the examination. The archbishop removed to Croydon for that purpose, to prevent the expected concourse of citizens at his examination. Whatever the archbishop thought at this time respecting the sacrifice of the mass or the corporeal presence, there was something particular in the conduct of his officers towards Frith.<sup>2</sup> As they were conducting him to Croydon, they

<sup>1</sup> Burnet.

<sup>2</sup> Fox.

very feelingly commiserated his case; but said, "As for the verity of your opinion in the sacrament of the body and blood of our Saviour Christ, it is so untimely opened here amongst us in England, that you shall rather do harm than good; wherefore be wise, and be ruled by good counsel until a better opportunity may serve." "This I am sure of," said one of them, "that my Lord Cromwell and my Lord of Canterbury much favouring you" — "will never permit you to sustain any open shame, if you will be somewhat advised by their counsel; on the other side, if you stand stiff to your opinion, it is not possible to save your life; for like as you have good friends, so have you mortal foes and enemies." This conduct of the officers probably bespoke the mind of their master.

Frith declared his confidence in the goodness of his cause when he should be impartially heard. "Yea, marry!" quoth the gentleman, "you say well, if you might be indifferently heard; but I much doubt thereof, for that our Master Christ was not indifferently heard, nor should be, as I think, if he were now present again in the world, specially in this your opinion — the same being so odious unto the world, and we so far off from the true knowledge thereof." "Well, well," quoth Frith, "I know very well that this doctrine of the sacrament of the altar, which I hold and have opened contrary to the opinion of the realm, is very hard meat to be digested, both of the clergy and the laity thereof. But this I will say to you, that if you live but twenty years, whatever become of me, you will see this whole realm of mine opinion concerning this sacrament of the altar; namely, the whole estate of the same, though some sort of men particularly shall not be fully persuaded therein." Afterwards, the archbishop's officers contrived to allow him to escape; but he positively refused: "If you should leave me here, and go and declare to the bishops that you had lost Frith, I would surely follow as fast after you as I might, and bring the news that I had found and brought Frith again." "Do you think that I am afraid to declare my opinion unto the bishops of England, in a manifest truth?"

The report of his conduct before the commissioners is, that "it was incredible and beyond all men's expectations." For final judgment he was delivered to his ordinary, and a writ was issued for his being burnt in Smithfield, on the 4th of June. He found a companion in his fiery trial, one Andrew Hewet, an apprentice. When he was examined, he refused to acknowledge the corporeal presence, but was illiterate, and resolved to do as

Frith did; so he was also condemned and burnt with him. When brought to the stake, Frith expressed great joy at his approaching martyrdom, and embraced in transport the faggots, as the instruments which were to send him to his eternal rest. A popish doctor of London called to the people that they should not pray for them any more than they would for a dog; at which Frith smiled, and prayed God to forgive him. Thus suffered one of the first reformers of England<sup>1</sup>.

In the present state of public opinion, these cruelties only tended to make the popish party more and more odious, for much light was let in among the common people by the New Testament and other good books, in English. These for the most part being printed beyond the sea, were by stealth brought into England, and dispersed by well-disposed men, at the hazard of their lives. Among these was Richard Bayfield, once a monk of St. Edmondsbury, who, twice in the year 1530, and once in the year after, imported his books. For more privacy, he landed them in different places; once at Colchester, the next time at St. Katharine's, London, and the last in some port in Norfolk, whence he brought them to London in a mail. At last he was taken at his bookbinder's in Mark Lane, and finally burnt in Smithfield. Another of these was Thomas Garret, curate of Honey Lane, who, in the year 1526, dispersed books of this sort in Oxford, whereby many in that university were enlightened in the truth of religion: he also suffered martyrdom about the year 1540. A third was George Constantine, who, about the same time with

<sup>1</sup> Whatever zeal against the usurpations of popery might animate Cranmer at this era, from his reflections in a letter he wrote respecting Frith's examination and execution, we cannot at this time number him with those who had in spirit and in truth embraced the doctrines of the Reformation. "One Frith, which was in the Tower in prison, was appointed by the king's grace to be examined before me, my lord of London, my lord of Winchester, my lord of Suffolk, my lord chancellor, and my lord of Wiltshire, whose opinion was so notably erroneous, that we could not despatch him, but was fain to leave him to the determination of his ordinary, which is the bishop of London. His said opinion is of such nature, that he thought it not necessary to be believed as an article of our faith, that there is the very corporeal presence of Christ in the Host and sacrament of the altar; and holdeth of this point most after the opinion of Ecolampadius. And surely, I myself sent for him two or three times, to persuade him to leave that his imagination; but for all that we could do therein he would not apply to any council: notwithstanding he is now at a final end with all examinations, for my lord of London has given sentence, and delivered him to the secular power, where he looketh every day to go to the fire." — *Letter to Hawkins, Archaeol.* xviii. p. 81. — LINGARD.

Bayfield, passed and repassed the seas upon the same errand ; he was, however, seized, and made disclosures to Sir Thomas More, which much impeded this happy method of enlightening the darkness of this island. But no watchfulness on the part of the papal clergy, nor proclamations of the government, which several times came forth, could effectually suppress this light ; and there is abundant evidence that there was a very considerable body of truly enlightened believers in England, who saw with delight the measures taken for the abolition of the pope-dom. And though they smarted under the tyranny of Henry, and were often disappointed by the fluctuations of his councils, and could not approve of the unjust robberies which he committed on the unprotected property of the ecclesiastics, yet they acknowledged, in all, the retaliating hand of God, giving them up for a prey, who had hardly yet ceased to receive the spoil, and doubted not that the truth would triumph at last.

The reformed saw, in this year, 1534, besides the public proceedings of the legislature for abolishing the papal influence, the elevation of several persons who were known friends to their cause. The new queen favoured them, and had chosen Shaxton and Latimer to be her chaplains. These were soon after promoted to the sees of Salisbury and Worcester, and began to discover, more and more, in the archbishop of Canterbury, a decided and very able patron, who, from what motive soever it might be, was vigorously assisted, in every attempt at reformation, by Cromwell, whom the king had made his chief minister for ecclesiastical affairs. But this reforming party in the king's council were strongly counteracted, and in the changes which ensued, sometimes overbalanced, by a powerful popish party, at the head of which were Gardiner, bishop of Winchester, Lee, archbishop of York, and generally all the bishops and clergy of his province who leaned this way ; with Stokesly, bishop of London, and Longland, bishop of Lincoln, the king's confessor, and, we may add, Wriothesley, afterwards chancellor, and the duke of Norfolk. In the subsequent part of this reign, as the one or other of these parties prevailed or obtained any advantage, the reformation in the church advanced or retrograded.

The king, from the particular circumstances of the times, was all-powerful and absolute — none durst resist his will ; and each party saw that the ascendancy of the cause it had in hand, depended much upon his favour or forbearance. The equal balance of these two religious parties added much to the extraordinary power of the crown at this era. The ecclesiastical and



civil states were poised much in the same manner; or rather, the former were compelled to strengthen the hand that spoiled them, that some protection might be afforded in return from those who would fain have robbed them of every part of their wealth and support. At the same time, the ancient aristocracy of the nation, by a long series of civil wars and confiscations, were much enfeebled, or counterpoised by a new race of hostile nobility, which had been raised by the royal favour and bounty. The commons, though rising in importance, were as yet unequal to the task of exercising any steady control over the machine of government, and were but too subservient to the ruling party at court.

The state of the Established Church of England, in its most essential requisite, the supply of religious instructors for the people, was deplorable indeed. The archbishop of York, to excuse the slowness of his proceedings, wrote to the court, that "in all his diocese he did not know, of secular priests, any number that could preach," necessary for such a diocese; "truly not twelve<sup>1</sup>." And one of the first measures of archbishop Cranmer, in the more civilised part of the kingdom, was, to forbid all preaching throughout his diocese, and to warn the bishops of his province to do the same, till new orders for preachers could be finished; for he found all those of the popish faction, making the queen's divorce the matter of their sermons. One of the first objects of the archbishop, was to procure the translation of the Scriptures into the vulgar tongue; and he so far prevailed with the convocation of the clergy held this year<sup>2</sup>, that they agreed to petition the king, "that the Bible might be translated by some learned men of his highness's nomination." This was a great step gained; but at the same time he was required, in the names of the bishops, abbots, priors, &c., to make instance with the king, "that he would vouchsafe for the increase of the faith of his subjects, to decree and command, that all his subjects in whose possession any books of suspected doctrine were, especially in the vulgar language, imprinted beyond or on this side of the sea, should be warned, within three months to bring them in, before persons to be appointed by the king, under a certain pain, to be limited by the king<sup>3</sup>."

In this year, as Burnet thinks, the archbishop, in the house of lords, expressed his opinion respecting the powers of a general council, with the calling of which the pope was at this time

<sup>1</sup> Strype, book i. epist. 26.

<sup>2</sup> A.D. 1534.

<sup>3</sup> Strype.



amusing the princes of Europe. “ He much doubted in himself as to general councils, and he thought that only the Word of God was the rule of faith which ought to take place in all controversies of religion. The Scriptures were called canonical, as being the only rule of the faith of Christians; and these, by the appointments of ancient councils, were only to be read in the churches. The holy fathers, Ambrose, Jerom, and Austin, did in many things differ from one another; but they always appealed to the Scriptures, as the common and certain standard: and he cited some remarkable passages out of Augustin, to shew what difference he put between the Scriptures and all other writings, even of the best and holiest fathers. But when all the fathers agreed in the exposition of any place of Scripture, he acknowledged he looked on that as flowing from the Spirit of God; and it was a most dangerous thing to be wise in our own conceit<sup>1</sup>,” &c.

The archbishop, at the same time, signified his intentions of addressing them on the power which the bishops of the Christian church have in their sees, and of the power of a Christian prince to cause them to do their duty. This speech, it appears, is lost; but it is easy to collect what the opinions of Cranmer and the royal reformers at this period were, on this subject. They appear to have been very similar to those which have since been named Erastian. The authority to coerce or punish, in all matters, ecclesiastical as well as civil, belonged to the civil magistrate—the pastoral office was only persuasive, and the power of the keys, as possessed by the minister of Christ, only bound the consciences of men—and they ought not, by their own authority, even to deprive them of the privileges of the visible church. The whole of the present ecclesiastical polity and jurisdiction, as exercised in the metropolitan and episcopal courts, or by the personal authority of the prelates, they considered as being nearly all derived from the civil power of the state.

It was with these notions of the royal power, that the king, by his vicar-general Cromwell, commenced at this time a general visitation of all the dioceses in the kingdom,—inhibiting, forbidding, and restraining all bishops to exercise episcopal authority during the time of the visitations. The design of this was, that the king, by taking all the episcopal jurisdiction and power into his own hands for a time, and exercising the same, it

<sup>1</sup> Strype.

might serve as a perpetual monument of his supremacy; and that the bishops, by receiving their power again from the king, might recognise him for the spring and foundation of it<sup>1</sup>.

All religious houses were especially included in the object of this visitation; no doubt with a view to their future suppression, for the king and Cromwell had already formed the design of seizing upon their property. They talked, indeed, of founding new bishoprics, schools, and hospitals—so Cranmer advised; but little of this was remembered or carried into execution. An immense property was soon afterwards confiscated to the crown, and bestowed with a lavish hand among the king's courtiers. First, the lesser monasteries were suppressed, and afterwards all the rest; nor did the revenues of the bishops and secular clergy escape from many and great spoliations. All this was, indeed, so far favourable to the progress of the Reformation, that it lowered the influence of the clergy, the great body of whom were yet Papists in their hearts; and it interested a great number of the first families to dread the return of the papal dominion, in order to secure their ill-gotten goods; yet, it realised very plainly the suggestion of Tindal, that “the counsels taken were not of a pure heart and love of the truth, but to avenge themselves, and to eat the whore's flesh and suck the marrow of her bones.”

Cranmer had, indeed, “thrust in,” to use the expression of this faithful martyr, that the Scripture might be in the mother tongue. A book, called “The King's Primer,” republished in 1535, had also given much offence to the Papists; for though it retained their doctrine and worship entire, it animadverted with severity on the grosser idolatries paid to the Virgin Mary and to images.

The condemnation and execution of Anne Boleyn, to the great joy of the Papists, and the dismay of the Protestants, happened about this time. The consideration of her innocence or guilt, or the proportion of her guilt or of her indiscretion, belongs not to this work. “Though she had departed no more than her husband from the ancient doctrine, yet as her marriage with Henry led to the separation from the communion of Rome, the Catholic writers were eager to condemn, the Protestants to exculpate, her memory<sup>2</sup>.” Certainly, on many occasions, she favoured the professors of what was called “the new learning,” and advanced their interests with the king; but that she had not received the hope of the Gospel, is but too plain, from her expression while

<sup>1</sup> Strype.

<sup>2</sup> Lingard.

in the Tower, expecting her death: "And then shall I be in heaven; for I have done many good deeds in my days<sup>1</sup>." Her death encouraged the Papists to bestir themselves to accuse and depress all that inclined to reformation. This year several clergymen and others were brought into trouble by them.

The death of Anne, however, had not that effect upon the measures of the king, which the Papists hoped. Cranmer still retained the king's favour; and in the convocation, if we have respect to the state of the church and nation, something considerable was done. Cromwell declared, by the king's order, that it was his pleasure that "the rites and ceremonies of the church should be reformed by the rules of Scripture, and that nothing was to be maintained, which did not rest on that authority."

Not many days afterwards, several articles were brought into the upper house, devised by the king himself, which, after much consultation and long debating, were agreed upon. By these articles, preachers were required to instruct the people to believe the whole Bible; to interpret all things according to the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian Creeds. Only three sacraments were retained as such,—baptism, penance, and the Lord's supper.

The all-important article of justification, however, is thus stated: "Justification signifieth remission of sins, and acceptance into the favour of God; that is to say, a perfect renovation in Christ." To the attaining of which, they were to have contrition, faith, charity; which were both to *concur in it* and follow it, &c. &c.

"Great and dangerous rebellions followed the measures of the king, chiefly excited by the disaffected clergy: but all were soon suppressed; and many of the remaining abbots and priors being, justly or unjustly, implicated in these rebellions, it accelerated the work of the dissolution of their houses. Great pains, at the same time, were taken to cure the people of their superstitious veneration for the miraculous images and relics, by exposing the various tricks and contrivances by which they had been deluded: for though the light of the Gospel had made considerable progress in some parts of the kingdom, the bulk of the common people, especially in the northern districts, were with great difficulty weaned from their idols."

The exasperation of the court of Rome, now knew no

<sup>1</sup> Strype's Mem. book i. chap. 36.

bounds : the sentence of deposition, for three years threatened, was published, 1538 ; and it appears from the style of the Bull, that notwithstanding the sad reverses the see of Rome had lately experienced, the pontiff had lowered none of his lofty pretensions. “ The pope,” it is said, “ being God’s vicar upon earth, and, according to Jeremiah’s prophecy, set over nations and kingdoms to root out and destroy, and have the supreme power over all the kings in the whole world,” &c. — it declares, that if the king and his accomplices do not appear to his summons, “ he has fallen from the right of his crown, and they from the right to their estates.” He requires “ all other persons to have no dealings with him or them, neither by trading or any other way, under the pain of excommunication and the seizure of their goods.” He charges “ all noblemen and others to rise up in arms against Henry, and to drive him out of his kingdom.” All the king’s contracts with foreign princes are dissolved : they are required “ to trade no longer with him, to seize on all goods and merchandise, and make slaves of all his subjects they can lay hold of.”

This assertion of authority is certainly the best justification of Henry, if any thing can justify him, for his violence against the partisans of Rome in his dominions ; and similar measures, in subsequent periods, on the part of the Roman see, so implicated the zeal of her friends in the crime of treason against the sovereign, that the Papists can seldom be said to have suffered in the cause of their religion alone.

“ But these ‘ great words’ had now little effect in England. All the bishops were brought to affix their signatures to a declaration, which concludes that Christ did expressly forbid his apostles or their successors to take upon themselves the power of the sword, or the authority of kings ;” — “ and that if the bishop of Rome, or any other bishop, assumed any such power, he was a tyrant and usurper of other men’s rights, and a subverter of the kingdom of Christ.” And, as if the king had been made sensible that some of his own measures might seem to infringe on the rights of the ministers of Christ, another paper, signed by the eight bishops nearest London, was set forth, shewing, “ That by the commission which Christ gave to churchmen, they were only ministers of his Gospel, to instruct the people in the purity of the faith ; but that by other places of Scripture, the authority of princes over all their subjects, as well bishops and priests as others, was also clear, and that the bishops and priests have charge of souls within their cures, and

power to administer sacraments, and to teach the Word of God, to which Word of God Christian princes acknowledge themselves subject; and that in case the bishops be negligent, it is the Christian prince's office to see them do their duty."

About this time was finished the printing of the English Bible. It had been thought necessary, for want of proper workmen, to have it printed at Paris, and the French king's leave had been obtained; but on the complaint of his clergy, the press had been stopped, and most of the copies seized and publicly burned. Some copies, however, had been secured, and, with the workmen and their machinery, brought over to England, where the work was resumed and completed, which was hailed as a most auspicious event by the friends of the reformation. Orders also were issued to all incumbents, "to provide one of these Bibles, and set it up publicly in the church; and not to hinder nor discourage the reading of it, but to encourage all persons to peruse it, as being the true Word of God, which every Christian ought to believe and follow," &c. The worship of images was also further discouraged at this time.

This was almost the utmost extent that the reformation, in public profession at least, reached in the reign of Henry VIII., and the bishops and clergy who were to carry these measures into execution, were for the most part hostile to them, so that in fact little was done. And what gives a worse view of the reforming bishops at this period, is, that we find them still united with the favourers of the papacy, in the persecution of those very tenets for which themselves were afterwards to suffer. We see, this year, three persons, who themselves were afterwards martyrs for the truth, and now, according to the light they had, encouragers of reformation, Cranmer, Latimer, and Barnes, among the persecutors of the Sacramentarians, as they were called; under which denomination would fall most of the true Protestants at this time in the kingdom. The case of John Nicholson is particularly striking. He was a convert of Bilney, a friend of Tindal and Frith; and on account of former troubles with the Papists, now went by the name of Lambert. He was brought to the stake for merely shewing his reasons against the belief of the corporeal presence, and refusing to retract. He was first convened before Cranmer, on the accusation of Taylor, afterwards bishop of Lincoln, and of Dr. Barnes. From the archbishop he ventured to appeal to the king, who chose in his own person to act the part of the unrighteous judge; and in the midst of his prelates and nobles, and a large assembly of people,

sat on his trial, in Westminster Hall. His royal throne and his guards, it is remarked, were, on this occasion, "covered and clad in white." Several bishops and divines, in succession, were appointed to convince the heretic of his error, which he must acknowledge or die. Although alone, threatened by the furious looks of the king, and daunted by the general applauses of the hall, which proclaimed him vanquished in argument, he maintained for five hours, what he thought to be the meaning of his Master's words. When reduced to silence, he was asked by the king, "whether he was convinced by these arguments, and whether he would live or die?" His only answer was: "I commend my soul to God; but my body I wholly yield and commit to your elemency." The king then said, "If you appeal to my judgment, you must die, for I will not be a patron of heretics." Cromwell was then ordered to read his sentence, which was soon after executed in Smithfield. Lambert met his death with great composure, and even cheerfulness. His cry, to the last of his protracted sufferings, was, "None but Christ! none but Christ!"

The interest of the Papists at court, seems at this period to have been stronger than ever; for when the agents of the German reformers, who visited England, attempted to bring the English church into a nearer conformity with themselves, they found the English bishops and doctors determined to retain their communion in one kind, their private mass, and celibacy of priests. The Papists had so well secured the king by their counsels, that they at last resisted all the endeavours of Cranmer to enter into any further conferences with the Germans on these abuses<sup>1</sup>. They even prevailed so far as to obtain a law, visiting with the punishment of heresy, or felony, all impugnors of these errors. This was called the act of "the Six Articles," which declared the popish doctrine of transubstantiation to be the true doctrine of the Eucharist; that vows of chastity were to be kept — though the religious houses were destroyed or marked for destruction. The necessity of auricular confession was also asserted. It is said that the king was moved to this, in his displeasure against Cranmer, for opposing the appropriation to his sole use of the lands and property of the dissolved monasteries<sup>2</sup>.

Latimer and Shaxton, on the passing of this act, laid down their bishoprics, and were both committed to prison; and

<sup>1</sup> Strype.

<sup>2</sup> Fox, Strype.



nothing saved the archbishop, but the personal respect which the king still retained for him, notwithstanding his bold opposition, as far as he could, to these measures. Five hundred persons were committed in virtue of the same act; but the king was prevailed upon to release them; and till after the fall of Cromwell, no more proceedings upon the statute are found. Cranmer had even interest, though strongly opposed by Gardiner, to obtain a proclamation permitting private persons to buy Bibles, and have them in their houses.

In the year 1540, happened the fall of Cromwell. Through the caprice of the tyrant, he was deprived of all his offices, thrown into prison, and afterwards beheaded. This was a great triumph of the papal party. Cranmer was fixed upon as the next sacrifice; and all men concluded he would follow his friend, whom he did not forsake in his disgrace, though it was ever criminal in the eyes of Henry to intercede on behalf of his destined victims. He had ventured, too, at this critical moment, to stand alone, in opposition to the popish counsellors, who had won the king.

In fact, the archbishop comes forth upon us at this time with new light and splendour. Whether it had pleased the Spirit of God, in this season of his affliction and danger, first to open his mind to instruction, or that the knowledge of God had now obtained a ripeness in his understanding, we perceive something altogether new in his testimony for the truth. He had been named with other bishops and learned men, in a commission, by the king, confirmed by act of parliament, to examine the doctrines and ceremonies retained in the church, and to make such alterations as were found necessary, "according to the very Gospel and Law of God, without any partial respect or affection to the papistical sort, or any other sect or sects whatsoever." The issuing of this commission was occasioned by the strong remonstrances of the German divines and princes, against the errors still retained in the English church. But it seems, while the commission was pending, the royal politics again underwent a change. Henry no longer feared the emperor, nor wanted the support of the Protestant princes; and it is conjectured that the fall of Cromwell, and the ascendant of the popish party, had some connexion with this event. The consequence was, that the other commissioners presented to the archbishop, at Lambeth, a set of articles of a most papistical tendency, declaring it to be the king's will and pleasure that they should pass in that form.



Here Cranmer was seen to make a noble stand. Cromwell was already cast into prison, and "his leaning to the side of reformation," was converted into the charge of heresy against him. Not one of the commissioners would stand on Cranmer's part, "but shrunk away and complied with the times; even those he trusted most." The bishops of Rochester and Hereford took him aside in his garden, to set before him the king's determination, and his own danger in resisting his will. The archbishop persisted in his disapprobation of their articles, and drew forth another set, with which he went himself to the king. With this "stiffness of the archbishop, his enemies were much pleased; they thought for certainty that he would be thrown into the Tower;" "and many wagers were laid in London about it. But the Papists were altogether disappointed. The king, this time, joined with him against all the rest, and his book of articles passed; and, by the authority already vested in the king and his commissioners by act of parliament, was declared to be the faith of the church of England<sup>1</sup>." In these articles of archbishop Cranmer, of which Mr. Strype has given some extracts, from a manuscript in the Cotton library, we see the rudiments of our present XXXIX Articles; and on some great fundamental points, the true doctrines of the Gospel are for the first time clearly set forth. On justification, the cardinal point in the contest between the Roman and the Protestant churches, we find it said: "Concerning justification we teach, that it properly signifies remission of sins, and acceptance, or our reconciliation into the grace and favour of God; that is, true renovation in Christ; and that sinners, although they do not obtain this justification without penitence and a good and inclining<sup>2</sup> motion of the heart, which the Spirit effects, towards God and 'our' neighbour; yet they are not justified on account of the dignity or merit of penitence, or of their other works or merits, but gratuitously on account of Christ by faith<sup>3</sup>—when they believe themselves to be received into grace, and their sins to be remitted for Christ's sake, who by his death has satisfied for our sins. This faith God imputes for righteousness before him, Rom. iii. and iv. But by faith we understand not an empty and idle<sup>4</sup> 'faith'—but that which worketh by love; for this is the true and Christian faith, concerning which we here speak, not a mere knowledge of the articles of the faith, or believing of the Christian

<sup>1</sup> Strype's Memoirs and Life of Cranmer.

<sup>3</sup> *Gratis propter Christum per fidem.*

<sup>2</sup> *Propenso.*

<sup>4</sup> *Inanem et otiosam.*

doctrine historically, but together with this knowledge and believing, a firm confidence<sup>1</sup> of obtaining the mercy of God promised for Christ's sake, by which we become certainly persuaded, and do think that he is merciful and propitious even to us. And this faith truly justifies, and is truly salutary — not feigned, dead, and hypocritical, but has necessarily hope and charity inseparably united with it, and also the intention of living well; and as place and opportunity are afforded, it does good; for good works are necessary to salvation; not because they make of an ungodly a just man, nor because they are the price for sins, or cause of justification, but because it is necessary that he who is justified by faith, and reconciled to God by Christ, should study to do the will of God," &c.

In these articles, though the error of the corporeal presence in the Eucharist was still retained, yet "that the sacrament conferred grace by the mere performance of the act, without faith in the receiver, was denied; and it is declared, that Christ was the sole sacrifice and satisfaction, and the only propitiation for our sins." Could the archbishop have made good this ground which he had gained, the foundations of the Roman Catholic faith had been destroyed; but as we shall see, this was only a temporary advantage. But it exhibits Cranmer to us in a new point of view; nor did his error respecting the Eucharist last much beyond this time.

The Roman party, with Gardiner and the duke of Norfolk at their head, still entirely prevailed at court, and Cranmer was compelled to retire much from public business; the consequence was a severe persecution, on pretence of executing the statute of the Six Articles. Multitudes were thrown into prison, or driven into banishment; and among the first victims who suffered death, was Dr. Barnes, and with him two other priests, Gerard and Jerome. The immediate cause of their suffering was their preaching at St. Paul's Cross, where they had answered a sermon of bishop Gardiner, delivered at the same place, "against justification by faith alone, and against the Lutherans." By a somewhat new process they were attainted of heresy in parliament, and by the same act four Papists were attainted of treason for denying the king's supremacy. All these were led to execution together, and the patience and charity of the Protestant martyrs were much taken notice of, as contrasted with the spite

<sup>1</sup> Firma fiducia.

and malice which the suffering Papists discovered towards them <sup>1</sup>.

Bonner, the new bishop of London, though he had come to his preferment by the utmost subserviency to the late measures for the abolition of the papal power, now discovered the greatest enmity against the reformers, and persecuted them with much violence. An ignorant boy of fifteen suffered at his instigation. A priest also was burnt at Salisbury, and two at Lincoln. A great number of persons also were brought into trouble, and kept a long time in prison, under this cruel statute. We find it particularly laid to the charge of one Wisdom, a clergyman of London, that he had taught “that at the day of judgment Christ would reward only of mercy, and not of merit;”—“that man has no free will to do good <sup>2</sup>.”

The king's supremacy was about this time fully established in Ireland. In the neighbouring kingdom of Scotland, the Roman Catholic clergy still reigned triumphant, in possession of nearly half the kingdom. Patrick Hamilton, a person nearly related to the royal family, who, by his travels in Germany, had acquired a knowledge of true religion, and had brought the glad tidings to his own country, perished in the flames.

The death of Hamilton produced much inquiry in Scotland. In the university, many were wrought upon; and, in particular, Seaton, the king's confessor, was removed from his situation for favouring the doctrines of Hamilton. Forest, a friar, was accused of saying that he had died a martyr, and was burned as a heretic. “A simple man is said to have advised the archbishop to burn him in some low cellar, because the smoke of Patrick Hamilton had infected all on whom it blew.” Two others were burnt in 1532, and several persons were forced to flee into England and other parts. These violent proceedings, however, were not sufficient to extinguish the light which Patrick Hamilton had kindled. The report of what was doing in England, had excited the attention of many.

The pope and Scottish clergy were very jealous lest their king, James, should follow the example of his uncle the king of England, and used every precaution to prevent all intercourse between them. In the year 1539, many were cited to appear before a meeting of bishops at Edinburgh; of these nine abjured, several were banished, and five burnt. On the following year,

<sup>1</sup> Burnet.

<sup>2</sup> Strype, Mem.

Russel, a friar, and Kennedy, a young man, were brought before the archbishop of Glasgow, who was compelled, much against his better judgment, to pass sentence upon them. They expressed such confidence and joy in their death, that a great effect was produced upon the spectators. Russel exhorted his fellow-sufferer, "Fear not, brother: for He is more mighty that is in us, than he that is in the world; the pain which we shall suffer is short and light, but our joy and consolation shall never have an end. Death cannot destroy us, for it is destroyed by Him for whose sake we suffer," &c.

The clergy were for the present all powerful, but the seeds of the future reformation were sown. The pope, the better to secure his interest in Scotland, made Beaton, the archbishop of St. Andrew's, a cardinal; and by the influence of the clergy, the king was precipitated into a war with England, which, proving disastrous, is thought to have hastened his death. He left an infant daughter, the unfortunate Mary Stuart, during whose unquiet reign, the popish interest was entirely overturned. Several noblemen who had been made prisoners in the late war, and taken into England, imbibed there a favourable disposition towards the reformation. The earl of Cassilis, in particular, is mentioned, who being committed, on his parole, to the care of Cranmer, at Lambeth, the pains of the archbishop to convince him of the errors of popery, were not unsuccessful; and he became afterwards a great promoter of the reformation in Scotland<sup>1</sup>.

The popish party in England were, in the mean time, using every artifice to discourage the publication of the Scriptures. They wished the present translation to be called in, under the pretence of providing one more perfect; but the archbishop had still interest enough to counteract them in this. An order was even procured for the reading of a chapter out of the New Testament on every Sunday and holiday throughout the year, in every parish church; and when the New Testament was gone through, then to begin with the Old<sup>2</sup>. But the king was soon infected, by his popish counsellors, with a jealousy of the reading of the Scriptures by the poor, and resolved to substitute in their stead a book which some time before had been published under the title of "The Erudition of a Christian Man," and which was called "The King's Book." It was a kind of catechism for the instruction of the people. A work of this nature had several

<sup>1</sup> Burnet. — Cooke's History of the Reformation in Scotland.    <sup>2</sup> Strype.

times, since the year 1537, been published, under the title of "Institution of a Christian Man," or "The Bishops' Book." These several editions mark the state of the reformation in the years of their respective publication; and as the last publication, "The Erudition of a Christian Man," had been made to favour the papistical errors more than the former, it was artfully denominated by the papal party "The King's Book." This being now to be used as a substitute for the Scriptures, a new and improved edition was ordered, and a copy directed to be sent to the archbishop. This book is still extant, with the archbishop's animadversions upon it, and they afford us a very favourable opportunity of learning the progress of his mind in religious truth. The short extracts in the note below, will enable the reader to assign to the archbishop his class among divines<sup>1</sup>.

The archbishop endeavoured this year also to push the reformation, by introducing in parliament "An Act for the Advancement of True Religion, and Abolishment of the contrary." His object was to qualify the severity of the late acts. He was faintly seconded by the bishops of Worcester, Hereford,

<sup>1</sup> "Only chiefly.—These two words may not be put in this place in anywise, for they signify that our election and justification cometh partly of our works, though chiefly it cometh of the goodness of God: but certain it is, that our justification cometh only and wholly of the benefit and grace of God, for the sake of Christ's passion, and for no part of our merits or good works: as St. Paul disputeth and proveth at length in the Epistles to the Romans and Galatians, and divers other places, saying; 'If by works, then it is no more of grace: if by grace, then it is no more of works.'

"Continuing a Christian life.—These words be superfluous, for continuance of a Christian life pertaineth unto pure faith.

"If fault be not in themselves.—This article speaketh only of the elect, in whom finally no fault shall be, but they shall perpetually continue and endure.

"If wilfully and obstinately they withstand not His calling.—Likewise the elect shall not wilfully and obstinately withstand God's calling.

"And so continuing.—Continuance is comprehended in faith; for if I believe not that I shall continue in the holy Catholic church, I cannot believe that I shall have any benefit in Christ.

"Became and made himself our Redeemer, Saviour, and Intercessor.—'Satisfaction'—which is put out, meseemeth, in any wise should stand still, to take away the root, ground, and foundation of all the chief errors whereby the bishop of Rome corrupted the pure foundation of Christian faith and doctrine. For upon this satisfaction did he build his sticks, hay, and straw, satisfactory masses, Trentals, *scala cæli*, foundations of chantries, monasteries, pardons, and a thousand other abuses, to satisfy the covetousness of him and his\*, &c.

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\* The MS. is printed entire in "The Fathers of the English Church," vol. iii.

Chichester, and Rochester, who had promised to support him; but was so violently opposed by Gardiner and the popish party, encouraged by a recent occurrence in politics, that the archbishop was again deserted by all his party, and earnestly entreated by some of them to wait for a better opportunity. He resolved, however, to persist and do what he could; "so he plied the king and the lords so earnestly, that at length the bill passed, though clogged with many provisoes, and very much short of what he had devised<sup>1</sup>."

The archbishop himself was next struck at; but the king discovered a generous friendship towards him, though it was plain enough that he and his chaplains were the encouragers of what the Papists called heresy, and were amenable to the penalties of their "Six Articles." On one occasion, the king took the accusation against Cranmer, and putting it into his sleeve, went towards Lambeth, and calling the archbishop into his barge, thus addressed him: "O my chaplain, now I know who is the greatest heretic in Kent!" and with great good nature enabled him to trace the conspiracy that had been formed against him in his own church and almost at his own table. Winchester, much to his discredit with the king, was found to have been the instigator. On occasion of another accusation against him in parliament, the king, after expressing his great indignation against the accuser, was heard to say respecting Cranmer, "What would they do with him if I were gone?"

A conspiracy was the next year<sup>2</sup> formed against him in the

<sup>1</sup> The Scriptures were now not absolutely forbidden, but forbidden to the poor: "None might read the Scripture in any open assembly, or expound it, but he who was licensed by the king or his ordinary; with a proviso that the chancellors in parliament, judges, recorders, or any others who were wont on public occasions to make speeches, and commonly took a place of Scripture for their text, might still do as they had done formerly;"—"every nobleman, or gentleman, might cause the Bible to be read to him;"—"every merchant that was a householder might also read it;"—"but no woman, nor artificers, apprentices, journeymen, serving-men under the degree of yeomen, nor any husbandman or labourer;"—"yet every noble woman or gentlewoman might read it for herself." "The penalties of the late acts were somewhat mitigated; but the Act of the Six Articles was so far retained, that the reformers lay at the king's mercy for their lives: and this it appeared, while the king was surrounded by Papists, was no great security; for a party at Windsor, known to have embraced the new learning, as it was called, were seized by a warrant from the king at the instigation of Gardiner, and three of them were burnt. It is noted, that the persecutors dared not trust to a jury taken from the town of Windsor, and therefore summoned them from the farms of the chapel."—BURNET.

<sup>2</sup> A.D. 1544.



privy council, of which the duke of Norfolk was at that time a leading member. They accused the archbishop before the king, "That he and his learned men had so infected the whole realm with their unsavoury doctrine, that three parts of the land were become abominable heretics; and that it might prove dangerous to the king, being like to produce such commotions and uproars as were sprung up in Germany; and therefore they requested that the archbishop might be committed to the Tower, because, being a privy counsellor, no one would dare to speak their mind against him unless he was first committed." The king permitted them to call him the next day before them, and if they saw reason, to commit him; but during the night, he sent privately for the archbishop, and told him what was going forward, and the permission he had given for his imprisonment; — "But whether I have done well or ill, what say you, my lord?" The archbishop thanked the king, and only asked of him to see him treated on his trial with impartiality; when the king exclaimed: "O Lord God! what fond simplicity have you, so to permit yourself to be imprisoned, that every enemy of yours may take advantage against you? Do not you know that when they have you once in prison, three or four false knaves will soon be procured to witness against you and condemn you? No, not so, my lord, I have better regard for you than to permit your enemies so to overthrow you," &c. He directed him to appear at their summons before the council, and to ask to be confronted with his accusers. If they persisted in sending him to the Tower, he was to shew them a ring, which the king gave to him — a known signal that he called the matter from before the council to himself.

All happened as was to be expected, with this additional circumstance, that the council put an indignity upon the archbishop, by suffering him to wait for three-quarters of an hour among the attendants in the ante-chamber. Dr. Butts, the king's physician, while this was going on, told the king, "I have seen a strange sight." "What is that?" said the king. "Marry, my lord of Canterbury is become a lacquey or a serving-man; for, to my knowledge, he has stood among them this hour almost, at the council door." The king's reply was: "Have they used my lord so! It is well enough — I will talk with them by and by." Nothing would serve the council but the commitment to the Tower. Cranmer then produced the ring, which soon brought them all into the king's presence, where



they received such a reprimand, as convinced all his enemies that the archbishop was beyond the reach of their malice.

A very remarkable anecdote is mentioned by Mr. Strype, which shews that Henry was fully sensible of the nature of the work in which the archbishop was engaged, and the dangers in which it was likely to involve him. The armorial bearings of Cranmer were three cranes *sable*. The king ordered them to be changed for three pelicans; and told him that "these birds would signify unto him that he ought to be ready, as the pelican is, to shed his blood for his young ones brought up in the faith of Christ;" "for," said the king, "you are like to be tasted, if you stand to your tackling, at length."

During the rest of the king's reign, though the papal party were all-powerful at court, and obtained some great accessions of authority to the episcopal office, which they made use of to stop the reformation, yet we occasionally see marks of Cranmer's influence. When Wriothesley, a papist, was made lord chancellor, Sir William Petre, a friend of the archbishop, succeeded him as secretary of state. The reformers were much pleased by the introduction of the English language in many parts of the church service. The church preferments were also in Cranmer's favour, particularly the promotion of Alrich from the see of Llandaff to the archbishopric of York. Holbeach, who favoured the reformation, was made bishop of Rochester; and Day, a moderate man, who was then thought to be inclined that way, was appointed to Chichester; so that the archbishop's party among the bishops was much increased<sup>1</sup>.

The archbishop was enabled, in the last years of the king, to procure the abolition of some superstitious practices in the worship of images and in the adoration of the cross. The Bible became more commonly read, and preaching more frequent. In the last year, Cranmer was engaged, by his order, to prepare a service for the alteration of the mass into a communion<sup>2</sup>. Still, however, the papists were able, on some occasions, to persecute under the statute of the Six Articles. Ann Askew, a lady of family, and three others, were burned in Smithfield, for denying the corporeal presence. Shaxton, who had given up his bishopric on the passing of the Articles, had, in his prison, embraced the obnoxious doctrine; but he recanted, and became afterwards a persecutor of the reformers. King Henry VIII. died on the 28th of January, 1547. Cranmer had been sent for at his request;

<sup>1</sup> Burnet.

<sup>2</sup> Strype's Cranmer.

but on his arrival he found the king speechless, though still sensible. The archbishop, after addressing him, asked for some token that he put his trust in God through Jesus Christ. As he directed him, the king presently wrung his hand hard, and soon after expired <sup>1</sup>.

The principles of the reformation were more and more disseminated in Scotland during the reign of the infant queen. In the year 1545, George Wishart, a faithful preacher of the Gospel, educated in Cambridge, was committed to the flames by Cardinal Beaton, before his castle gates, while himself beheld the cruel spectacle from a window, where he sat in state. In this murder, the cardinal had acted, not only without the consent of the supreme power of the state, but in direct defiance of the regent's prohibition. His own murder, in revenge, was the consequence — certainly not by men who deserve the name of reformers. But it was under the banners of these murderers of Beaton, who held the castle and city of St. Andrew's, in defiance of the civil power, that the celebrated Knox and his companions, first commenced the preaching of the reformation in Scotland; and it is to be feared they did not altogether disapprove of this instance of private revenge, in the assassination of the cardinal.

On the death of Henry VIII., his only son, Edward VI., a child of eleven years of age, succeeded. He had been educated in principles favourable to the reformation, and discovered a conscientious regard for its doctrines and precepts, very remarkable for his years. He lived to reach the age of sixteen years only, and died after a reign of six years and a half.

During this period, the reformation was fully established in England. The majority of the council of the young prince, and the two protectors, who were successively raised by the politics of the court, Seymour, duke of Somerset, and Dudley, duke of Northumberland, encouraged its progress. At the same time, however, these nobles carried on the spoliation of church property with the most greedy avidity, and in their secular ambition discovered little of the control of religion; so that it may justly be doubted how far the love of truth, or any superior motives, entered into their patronage of the Gospel. Cranmer, however, supported by the weight of his character and of his high station,

<sup>1</sup> Strype: see also Burnet. The Papists are not satisfied with this account of his death. One of them, Sanders, says: "When the king found himself expiring, he called for a bowl of white wine, and said to one that was near him, '*We have lost all:*' and was often heard repeating, '*Monks! Monks!*' and so he died."

was now enabled to bring the public profession of Christianity into a state more corresponding to the light his own mind had received in the progress he had made in scriptural knowledge.

It may be noted as a very favourable circumstance in the inceptive reformation under Henry VIII., that it had become an established maxim, that the Scriptures were the only standard of faith and religion; for though the late king was often persuaded by his popish advisers, that it was not safe to permit them to be read without restriction by the common people, because of the ill use they would make of them, through their ignorance and simplicity, yet the sole authority of the Scriptures was never called in question. In all the original documents of the times, popish tradition, and even arguments from the fathers, were paid little regard to: whatever errors were retained, we always find they are supported by passages of Scripture, misunderstood or misapplied. The king's extravagant notions of his supremacy, were grounded on texts of Scripture, on the examples of Jewish kings, and on the silence of the sacred writings, as to that kind of ecclesiastical authority which the Roman Catholic bishops exercised under the pope. The error of transubstantiation was retained on the same ground. "This is my body," was considered as conclusive of the controversy. This foundation of the sole authority of Scripture being laid, it was impossible, under the Divine blessing, however tyranny, bigotry, ignorance, or the fear of sedition, might hinder or arrest its progress, that religious knowledge should not increase, and error yield to the truth of God's holy Word, in proportion as it became more known and understood. Thus, the corporeal presence, and mass itself, as retained by the reforming part of the church at the death of Henry, were in their minds reduced almost to the state that, as Tindal expressed it, "To believe that the body of Christ is every where — though it cannot be proved — hurteth no man that worshippeth him nowhere save in the faith of his Gospel." In the king's will, indeed, was found the usual provision for masses to be sung for his soul, — a great inconsistency in him who had abolished the monasteries and chantries! Purgatory, however, had been declared not clear from Scripture; and before his death it had been projected to change the mass itself into a communion. Images still stood in churches, but were regarded very differently from what they had been in the times of superstition; insomuch that, when the people in some places, at the beginning of this reign, began to demolish them, Gardiner exclaimed,

“ that they were going farther than the Lutherans had done, for he had seen images standing in their churches.”

At what exact period archbishop Cranmer was brought to receive that doctrine of the presence in the sacrament, which he thought so horrible in Frith and Bilney, does not appear. We saw him sound in the faith in the year 1540, and he no longer could regard the mass as a sacrifice for sins, or as a satisfaction. About the same time also, it is probable, he was enlightened to give up the strictly literal sense of the words, “ This is my body,” and receive the figurative, or more properly the mystical sense of these words, to which Luther and his followers could never be brought. We know that he regarded the Catholic ceremonies which he was far from approving, and endeavoured to remove, as laws of the land, to be obediently observed till they should be abolished by authority.

With respect to episcopal authority, we have already noticed Cranmer’s opinion. Except in their character of ministers of the Word<sup>1</sup>, he held the bishops, in every part of their functions, even to the ordaining of the inferior clergy, to act as the king’s officers, in a manner analogous to the appointment of the judges. As these carried into execution the laws of the realm, as delegated from the king, who was the sole depositary of the public authority ; so it was considered that he was equally the head of the ecclesiastical state, and possessed there, in like manner, the entire executive authority, which he delegated to such persons, and for so long, as he pleased.

This view of the constitution of the kingdom, did not give the king a legislative authority in the church, any more than in the state. The legislative authority was in a similar manner lodged in the king conjointly with the lords spiritual and temporal, and the representatives of the commons assembled in parliament. It was held to be the law, that the bishops and clergy, though acting by the express authority of the king, would be guilty of a *præmunire*, in transgressing the common law or any act of parliament<sup>2</sup>; and there was still a right, notwithstanding the high tone of prerogative, which a bishop had in his diocese, and a clergyman in his benefice, only dependent on the law.

<sup>1</sup> The words in the royal commission to Cranmer are : “ *Cæteraque omnia et singula in Præmissis, seu circa ea necessaria, seu quomodolibet opportuna, per et ultra ea quæ tibi ex Sacris Literis divinitus Commissa esse dignoscuntur, vice, nomine, et autoritate nostris exequend :* ” — BURNET’S *Col.* vol. ii. No. II.

<sup>2</sup> See Audley’s opinion in Winchester’s Letter, Burnet’s Collection, No. XIV, and Hist. Reform. vol. ii. p. 38.

The nation seems at this time to have been much divided about religion. In the market towns and places of trade, and especially in the metropolis, the people were generally favourable to the reformation; in the more uncivilised parts of the nation ignorance and superstition still prevailed. The great body of the bishops and clergy were hostile to all innovation, and had a special enmity to the Gospel. Their numbers had, indeed, been filled up, of late years, from the members of the depressed monasteries. The saving of their pensions had very generally recommended them to preferment, though the most enslaved to the papal superstition. With Cranmer, however, on the side of reformation, were Holgate, archbishop of York, the bishops of Lincoln and Ely, with Ridley, elect of Rochester. Old Latimer, restored to his liberty, did not resume his bishopric, but went and resided with the archbishop at Lambeth, and greatly assisted him in his labours. The cause of the reformation, however, felt much the want of a sufficient number of men duly qualified to preach the doctrines of the truth to the people; and many errors were now springing up among those who were opposed to the papacy. The notions of the Anabaptists had found an ingress into the kingdom, and even Arianism was taught.

The first measure of the reformers was, by the authority of government, to institute a general visitation of the kingdom. In order to paralyse the efforts of the Romish clergy, it was procured that the bishops and incumbents should preach only in their own cathedrals and churches without a special license, and these licenses were only issued to approved persons. Homilies also were prepared, and directed by royal authority to be read in the churches. These were twelve in number, and are those which now compose the first part of our Book of Homilies; and considering the object of their publication, they set forth the great doctrines of the Gospel in a very able manner, and with great simplicity and perspicuity. These homilies were highly approved by the reformers abroad, especially by the learned Bucer of Strassburgh, who wrote a congratulatory letter to the church of England. He said, "By this full and dexterous restitution of Christ's doctrine, his kingdom was so fully explained to the people, that there could no relics of the old leaven remain long in any parts of our ceremonies or discipline." Then he took occasion "to stir up the ecclesiastical rulers to go on with the reformation of the sacrament<sup>1</sup>," &c.

<sup>1</sup> Strype's Mem.

The Book of Homilies, and Erasmus's Paraphrase of the New Testament, which was at the same time commanded to be provided by every parish, gave great offence to the Papists at home, and especially to Bishop Gardiner, their head. He was successful in pointing out some contrariety between the doctrine of the Homilies and that of the Paraphrase, which certainly ought to have been guarded against; but the motive of the reformers in choosing this work of Erasmus, was the sole authority of his name, — though he had since gone over to the Papists, — and the very masterly and powerful manner in which he had exposed the popish abominations that at this time blinded so great a part of the nation. The great anger of Winchester, that this book — “which he wrote in his wanton age” — should “be sent by royal authority throughout the kingdom,” is a sufficient proof that the policy of the reformers, so far, was good. But it was the doctrine of “justification by faith alone,” in the homilies, that most offended Gardiner<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> He says in his letter to the Protector\*, “The Book of Homilies in the ‘Sermon of Salvation’ teacheth the clean contrary to the doctrin established by Act of Parliament — in the Book of Erudition,” &c. — “even as contrary as *includeth* is contrary to *excludeth*, for these be the words of the doctrin established by Parliament; where in a certain place faith doth *not exclude*. The doctrin of the Parliament speaketh how they be joyned in justification, the Homilies speak the virtues to be present in the man justified, and how faith *excludes* them in the office of justification; which never can be proved, and is in the mean time contrary to the Act. The Book of Homilies hath in the Homily of *Salvation*, how remission of sins is taken, accepted, and allowed of God for our perfect justification; the doctrin of the Parliament teacheth justification, for the fulness and perfection thereof, to have more parts than remission of sins, as in the same appeareth: and tho’ remission of sins be a justification, yet it is not a full and perfect.” He charged the archbishop “for troubling the world with such a needless speculation as this is; because, that in baptism we are justified, being infants, before we can talk of the justification we strive for; for all men receive their justification in their infancy in baptism, and if they fall after baptism, they must rise again by the sacrament of penance,” &c. In his letter to Cranmer, he says, — “If I should make a Homily de Vita Perfectâ, I wolde note two parts — oon of life, another of perfite-ness: for the grownde of the oon, I wolde take S. John: ‘God sent his Son into the world, that we might live by him:’ and for the other, ‘Be ye perfect as your Father,’ &c. In the declaration of *life*, I wolde take occasion to speke of *faith*, the gift of entre to life; and of charite the very gift of life; which who hath not, remaineth in dethe. And therefore S. James said, *Faith without works is dead*: not expounding that so as though faith without charite were no faith, as we say a dead man is no man; for I wolde wish the people in any wise to beware of that fashion of teaching, and such a sophistical understanding of S. James, &c. I

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\* Strype's Cranmer, Appendix, No. XXXVI.



A convocation and parliament were held in the latter end of the year, in which the archbishop procured the repeal of the Six Articles, the abolition of private masses, and the alteration of the mass into the communion service. At the same time, a Lutheran catechism, used at Nuremberg, being revised by the archbishop, was published and circulated by his directions<sup>1</sup>.

Thus, a great progress was made in the abolition of the remainders of the popish worship, in the first year of Edward VI. But many difficulties were found in carrying the changes into execution, not only from the unwillingness of the papistical clergy, but also from the country people, who generally loved the shows and processions of the old worship, as the heathen did the festivities of their gods, of which, indeed, many parts of the Romish ceremonies were remnants. They thought it a dull business to come to church only for Divine worship and to hear sermons<sup>2</sup>. It would seem, indeed, that some violence was used in removing the objects of their veneration, which required to be checked by government. "However, by its orders the following year<sup>3</sup>, all images were to be removed, and their coverings given to the poor. Some restraint, it appears, had been put on the licensed preachers in these matters, which were not much relished by the more zealous reformers; but the council declare, in a letter dated in May, that, by the restraint put on preaching, they only intend to put an end to the rash contention of indiscreet men, and not to extinguish the lively preaching of the pure Word of God, after such sort as the Holy Ghost should for the time put into the preachers' minds; they were therefore charged to preach sincerely, and with that caution and moderation that the

wolde be most earnest to show, that in charity is life, whereunto faith is thentre; which faith without charite is not noo faith, but dead."

These extracts, with a comparison of the homily referred to, will serve well to shew the state of the controversy between the Papists and our reformers on this great fundamental point; only remembering that, among the Papists, by charity or love was not understood the sense of God's love to us shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, but our love to God and our neighbour, attested by our works. This was the charity, in the language of the times, excluded by the reformers in justification, and made a consequence only.

<sup>1</sup> Some expressions were objected to as too much favouring the Lutheran notion of the corporeal presence; but the archbishop replied, "That we in the sacrament do receive the body and blood of Christ spiritually; and that the words 'really' and 'substantially' were not used, but 'truly.'" — STRYPE.

<sup>2</sup> A. D. 1549.

<sup>3</sup> Burnet.



time and place shall require ; and particularly, that they should not set on the people to make innovations, or to run before those whom they shall obey<sup>1</sup>," &c.

In this year, the new Book of Communion, in part the same as that now used in the church of England, was sent to the clergy. A public and general confession of sins was enjoined as sufficient, and private or auricular confession was rendered optional. A form of morning and evening prayer was also compiled, selected from the most ancient parts of the former worship, which had been used in the earliest ages of Christianity, and the singing of psalms taken out of Scripture was authorised<sup>2</sup>.

This was about the awful period of the INTERIM, when many thought the cause of the reformation was lost in Germany, and turned their eyes more than ever towards England. Calvin wrote to the protector, encouraging him to proceed in the good work<sup>3</sup>. Peter Martyr was already with Cranmer ; and Fagius and Bucer being compelled to leave Germany on account of the Interim, the archbishop invited them over to England. Fagius died soon after his arrival ; Martyr was fixed at Oxford, and Bucer at Cambridge, and they were both much consulted in the future measures of the reformation. It was this year enacted in parliament, " that all spiritual persons, of whatever degree, might lawfully marry."

In the following year<sup>4</sup>, an act was passed respecting fasting. It was declared, in the preamble, that " no day, or kind of meat, was purer than another." The general use of abstinence is pointed out, and the necessity of encouraging fishing, and of saving flesh." On these grounds, certain days of fasting are enjoined. A new visitation took place this year : a complaint was heard, that the priests read the new service in the same tone of voice in which they had been accustomed to read the Latin, so that the people could understand it but little better<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Burnet.

<sup>2</sup> " Our church of England has omitted none of those offices wherein all the ancient churches were agreed ; and where the British or Gallican differed from the Roman, our church has not followed the Roman, but the other. And therefore our dissenters do unreasonably charge us with taking our offices from the church of Rome \*." The Gallican liturgy was introduced, it seems, into England, in the beginning of the fifth century, and is said to have been originally framed by Polycarp and Irenæus.

<sup>3</sup> Oct. 29.

<sup>4</sup> 1549.

<sup>5</sup> Burnet.

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\* Stillingfleet's *Origines Britannicæ*, cap. iv.

It is painful to record, that the principles of the age in which our reformers had been brought up, still led them to persecute to death, even to the cruel death of burning, those who were convicted of heresies in fundamental doctrines—the articles of the Apostles' Creed. They argued it to be the bounden duty of the magistrate, and urged, as a precedent, the command in Scripture—that the blasphemer should be stoned to death. This was Cranmer's argument with the young king, whose mind revolted from the idea of signing the warrant for the execution of Joan Bocher, a woman who had denied the proper manhood of Christ.

Some years afterwards, Van Pare, a Dutchman, was burnt for refusing to own the divinity of Christ.

At this time appeared many Anabaptists in several parts of England; they were chiefly Germans, many of them of the same cast as those who had thrown Germany into confusion. Some of them denied the doctrine of the Trinity, others were charged with Pelagianism, and certain of the grosser errors of the ancient Gnostics were also found among them. Some of the more violent were treated with great severity. Burnet mentions a more harmless kind, who differed from their brethren, only respecting the lawfulness of infant baptism. "I find no severities," he says, "used against them; but books were written against them, and they wrote answers<sup>1</sup>."

The measures which were pursued against the Papists, must be acknowledged to have been lenient, considering the times; but both Gardiner and Bonner were deprived of their sees. The bishopric of London was given to Ridley, who was consecrated according to the new ordination service. This was the last sacred service of the church, which had been cleansed from the dregs of papal and Romish corruptions; and it has been judged by many, in its present form, to be a very successful delineation of the pastoral office, its relations, and responsibilities,—as that institution was understood by those who first received it from the hands of Christ and his apostles.

Mr. Strype observes: "The sentiments of the Protestant foreigners concerning the present English state, deserve a particular remark. They took such great joy and satisfaction in this good king, Edward VI., and his establishment of religion, that the heads of them, Bullinger, Calvin, and others, in a letter to him, offered to make him their defender, and to have bishops in their churches, as there were in England, with the tender of

<sup>1</sup> Hist. Reform. vol. ii. p. 112.

their service to assist and unite together. This nettled the learned at the Council of Trent, who came to the knowledge of it by their private intelligencers; and they verily thought, that all the heretics, as they called them, would now unite among themselves and become one body, receiving the same discipline exercised in England; which, if it should happen, and that they should have heretical bishops near them in those parts, they concluded that Rome and her clergy would utterly fall. Whereupon, they sent two of their emissaries from Rotterdam into England, who were to pretend themselves Anabaptists, and preach against baptising infants, preach up re-baptising, and a fifth monarchy upon earth<sup>1</sup>."

The Papists knew well the weak parts of the reformation,—the rise of these sectaries in the midst of it, who were enemies to all order and subordination, and had grounded such strange extravagancies upon its grand principle,—“that the Scripture was to be the only rule of Christians.” Their re-baptising being a visible object that struck the attention, procured for them all the name of Anabaptists. But many of these unqualified interpreters of Scripture, had pronounced the mysteries of the Trinity and of Christ’s incarnation and sufferings, of the fall of man and the aids of grace, to be “philosophical subtleties, falsely deduced from Scripture.” Some held principles subversive of all civil government and subordination in society; and concluding themselves to be the instruments foretold in prophecy, that were to destroy all the kingdoms of men, and to introduce the reign of the Messiah upon earth, they wanted only the power, to carry their fanatical schemes into execution, with the same unrelenting cruelty and obscenity, as had been shewn at Munster and in other parts of Germany. This was certainly the bane of the reformation, and has all the appearance of a contrivance of the prince of darkness, in order to libel the free use of the Scriptures among the people, and to induce their rulers to return to the lesser evils of the Roman tyranny, to avoid sedition and rebellion. Although this fanatical spirit has never been entirely subdued, but has coalesced with the spirit of infidel philosophy in the late revolutions, experience has shewn that, notwithstanding every abuse to which they are liable, the SCRIPTURES may be trusted in the hands of the common people, to their temporal, no less than their religious improvement.

But how difficult it is to throw off the trammels of super-

<sup>1</sup> Life of Cranmer, book ii. chap. 15.

stition and vindicate the rights of Christian liberty, and, at the same time, to know where we ought "in love to serve one another," and "be all subject one to another in the fear of God," soon appeared, in the trifling disputes which separated those who were united together in all essential matters. The seeds of dissension were now sown among the reformers of England, — "a root of bitterness which has defiled many," on both sides, who have cherished it, and, humanly speaking, has greatly hindered the reformation in its more essential interests. This spirit manifested itself, in a particular manner, on the appointment to the bishopric of Gloucester of Mr. John Hooper, a truly pious man, who was in high esteem as a popular preacher of the doctrines of the reformation. He objected to be consecrated in the episcopal garments, as directed by the existing laws; and not content with merely refusing his appointment, had openly declaimed, in the London pulpits, against the garments, for Peter Martyr takes notice of "his unseasonable and too bitter sermons." Those who have seen the consequences which have flowed from this letting out of the waters of contention, will feel a wish that, if possible, there could have been a common agreement among the reformers on this certainly not very important point; that they would either have united their influence to procure a regulation of the legislature which would have been generally satisfactory, or have left it to regulate itself according to the taste of each. But then, these "bitter sermons," as well as "the unnecessary interference of authority," must have been restrained, or the breach might have been rendered wider than ever.

Among certain divines of the Helvetic persuasion, with whom some of the English had great intercourse, a new school of reformers had been formed. A distinctive mark of this school was, such an abhorrence of every thing that had been done in the church of Rome, that they had a sentimental tendency, in every dispute, to deem that to be most pure and true, which seemed farthest removed from her doctrines and practice. In this they had a kindred feeling with the Anabaptists, although they were very far from adopting most of their conclusions, or from imitating their lawless violence. They were still perfectly Romanists on the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation, and Augustinians on the doctrines of grace. Zuinglius's doctrine of the lawfulness of resisting by force the sovereign authority, had not been as yet received in England. Their principle of reformation, however, aimed at the reversing and overturning of every thing which had been abused in the Roman Catholic church.

This disposition had shewn itself among their less prudent followers, in the controversy on the eucharist. Because this holy mystery had been made an object of idolatry among the Papists, some of them hardly respected the institution of Christ, and indulged themselves in very abusive language respecting it; many lowered it to a mere ceremony or figurative rite, and seemed almost to hesitate whether it was not to be numbered with their "beggarly elements." In their extreme, they would have reduced public worship to a true correspondence with the satire of the Papists on the Protestant worship in general—to "a mere preachment!" The reformers of the church of England were carrying on their reformation in a different spirit. They considered the Catholic church as being much corrupted by the false doctrines and idolatrous superstitions of the bishop of Rome, and verily believed that he was the predicted "man of sin," "sitting in the temple of God;" but when they removed the idol, they spared the structure. They did not treat it as a house of Baal, but as a holy building, which was to be purified and reconciled to its original use; and they thought they should more certainly bring it back in its primitive state, by learning the original uses of what they found therein, removing nothing in haste, till they had ascertained that it had not been simply abused, but actually introduced, by the idolatrous priests. They aimed at carrying out the filth from the house of the Lord, and building again the altar of God which had been cast down. If they proceeded somewhat slowly in this work, we must remember their situation. They had not, like the divines of Zurich or of Geneva, merely to persuade the people belonging to two or three congregations, in one small town, to change their religious rites and ceremonies, but they were called to alter the whole religious establishment of a great nation, a large portion of which was averse to quit the customs of their fathers, and ready to rise against their rulers, for the changes already introduced.

With respect to the episcopal garments—most of which were soon afterwards laid aside—they thought them, in themselves, things indifferent; but as they were enjoined by law, that it was their bounden duty to wear them. When the archbishop was entreated to dispense with their use at the consecration of Hooper, his answer was, "that without an Act of Parliament, he should be guilty of a *præmunire* in doing so, even at the command of the king." He consulted, on this occasion, Bucer and Martyr, the two learned foreigners whom he had placed in the universities. They both disapproved of the conduct of Hooper,

and of his objections. Although they were both divines of the Helvetian church, and owned they preferred the practice of those churches, yet, being a matter of indifference, he ought to obey, and not impugn what the law had enjoined. Hooper had insisted, “that to wear the garments was to bring back again the priesthood of Aaron—that they were inventions of Anti-christ, and that we ought to be estranged not only from the pope, but from all his devices.” Bucer pointed out several customs of the church, from the times of the apostles, and some now in use, to which he had not objected, which might be called Aaronical from their origin; that the difference of garments had not their original from the pope, as he shewed from ecclesiastical history; and that it was to press the church of God with too much servitude, to deny it the liberty to use any thing that belonged to the pope. Hooper still refusing compliance, was committed to the Fleet by the council,—not for refusing the bishopric, but because of his preaching against the rites by law established: “he coveted to prescribe orders and necessary laws of his head.” Hooper, however, in a short time, waived his objections, and, with some connivance, was consecrated in the usual form<sup>1</sup>.

This same year the Book of Common Prayer was again revised. Bucer and Martyr were particularly consulted, and their advice was much respected. In imitation of the German churches, the “Confession” and “Form of Absolution” were added to the morning and evening services; and some things which were thought to savour of superstition, were altered in the communion service—the direction for the bishop’s putting on the obnoxious garments when he officiated, was omitted—the bread was to be given into the hand, not put into the mouth, as heretofore—exorcism in baptism and praying for the dead, though used in the primitive church, were left out as unscriptural—all altars were ordered to be removed, and tables placed in their stead. For refusing compliance with these new laws, Hethe, bishop of Worcester, and Day, bishop of Chichester, were deprived, but were treated with great kindness. Gardiner and Bonner, however, for their contumacy, were committed to prison.

England, at this period, was a general asylum for the refugees of other countries, who had fled from persecution at home. There were congregations of French, Italian, and Dutch strangers, and Mr. Strype thinks of Spaniards also, who were

<sup>1</sup> Burnet and Strype.



encouraged and protected by the government. The confiscation of church property had, however, been carried on to an alarming extent. Cranmer and Ridley, and the other reformers, strove in vain to check the covetousness of the courtiers. Bucer had several times remonstrated with government. Calvin also wrote about this time, both to the archbishop, and to the protector Somerset. He complains "that the revenue of the cures was withdrawn and dispersed away, so that there was nothing to maintain good men who were fit to perform the office of true pastors, and hence it came to pass that ignorant priests were put in; which made great confusion, for the quality of the persons begat great contempt of God's Word." He advised the duke "to endeavour to bring those who had these spiritual possessions to be willing to part with them; inasmuch as they could not prosper in defrauding God's people of their spiritual food, which they did by hindering the churches of good pastors."

It is thought that, besides the abbey-lands and impropriations, one-half, and in many cases two-thirds of the property of the church, and, indeed, in some instances, a much larger proportion, had been alienated. This opportunity of plunder had, no doubt, bribed many, in favour of the reformation; and it appeared soon afterwards, that though they were willing to give up their religion, and to suffer the teachers of the Gospel to be committed to the flames, yet they could not be brought to give back their sacrilegious spoils; insomuch, that the pope was obliged to confirm them in their possessions, before his authority could be restored. Many had been enriched by these spoils; but how little could be afforded to support the cause of the Gospel, we have an instance in the case of Bucer, who this year finished his labours. "He died but poor, and seemed to be in some want of necessaries in his last sickness." In these circumstances, however, he found the consolations of Christian friendship. He was, in particular, much indebted to the kind offices of Catharine, duchess dowager of Suffolk, afterwards an exile for the Gospel's sake, who personally attended and watched with the dying saint. When told of his approaching dissolution, his exclamation was: "*Ille, Ille regit et moderatur omnia!*—He—He reigns, and governs all things!"

The same year, the famous Melancthon was invited to succeed him. John Knox was also appointed preacher to Berwick; he afterwards received a salary, and was employed in London and Buckinghamshire till the king's death. This appointment was not conducive to the future peace of the church of England;



for Knox, though one of the greatest and most efficient of the reformers, may be considered as 'the head of the new Helvetian school among the British divines; and when, a few years afterwards, he had with great ability conducted the reformation in Scotland, uniting the politics of Zuinglius with an extreme antipathy to the Romish church, he gave by his example great encouragement to the disaffected among the reformers in England, from whom in a subsequent reign sprang the secession of the Puritans.

Mr. Strype remarks under this year, 1550, concerning those who prejudiced and hindered the Gospel, that "they were of two kinds — Sectaries and Papists. The former appeared now in Essex and Kent, of whom complaint was made to the council. These were the first that made separation from the reformed church of England, having gathered congregations of their own," both at Bocking and at Feversham, and in other places. "Their teachers, and divers of them, were taken up, and found sureties for their appearance; and at length were brought into the ecclesiastical court, where they were examined on forty-six articles, or more." They confessed the following to be some sayings and tenets among them: "That the doctrine of predestination was meeter for devils than for Christian men — that children were not born in original sin" — "that there was no man so chosen but that he might damn himself; neither any man so reprobate but that he might keep God's commandments and be saved — that St. Paul might have damned himself if he listed — and that learned men were the cause of great errors" — "all errors were brought in by learned men<sup>1</sup>." Other doctrines of theirs were: "That God's predestination was not certain, but upon condition — that they ought not to salute any sinner or a man they knew not — that lust after evil was not sin if the act was not committed — that Adam was elected to be saved; and that all men, being then in Adam's loins, were predestinated to be saved; and that there were no reprobates — that the preaching of predestination is a damnable sin — that we are not to communicate with sinners," &c. In the January following, a special commission against these Anabaptists was issued out by the king, to the archbishop of Canterbury and others.

Most of the year 1551 was spent in preparing articles which should contain the doctrines of the church of England. These were forty-one in number; they were in substance, on all

<sup>1</sup> Memorials, vol. ii. book i. chap. 29.

essential points, the same as our present **Thirty-nine Articles**, and had a special regard, in their structure, to the errors of the Papists on one side, and to the errors of the Anabaptists on the other<sup>1</sup>. The Book of Common Prayer was still further revised. The cope and vestment in the dress of the clergy were ordered to be laid aside, and the bishops laid aside their crosses<sup>2</sup>. Miles Coverdale, the friend and coadjutor of Tindal, was consecrated bishop of Exeter. In the following year, the Book of Common Prayer, in its revised form, received the sanction of parliament. The churches were now stripped of all their furniture and ornaments; so that those who approved the pomp and ceremonies of the ancient worship, compared them to barns. But, because kneeling at the sacrament and the surplice were retained, some, who had taken their idea of perfection from the Helvetic churches, were not satisfied; and however eminent they might be for their zeal and knowledge, their “wisdom” certainly was not of that kind which is “easy to be entreated.” Except under the cross, how rarely do we see in church history a full delineation of the Christian character!

At this time, a catechism was sent forth by authority, for the instruction of youth, which goes by the name of “**King Edward’s Catechism**,” and has been attributed to Poynt, bishop of Winchester; though many have ascribed it to Noel, afterwards dean of St. Paul’s, and at that time master of Westminster school, who afterwards drew up a catechism in Latin. Coverdale also published a corrected edition of Tindal’s Bible. A plan had long been formed, by the archbishop and the other reformers, for the restoration and improvement of ecclesiastical discipline; but whether the nation in its present corrupted state would have endured it, may well be questioned, for—with the noble exception of the throne—the court, nobility, and great body of the church and of the people, are described, by contemporary writers, as being in a most demoralised state<sup>3</sup>. The doc-

<sup>1</sup> Burnet.—These last are expressly mentioned in the Article on Original Sin—“As the Pelagians do vainly talk, and at this day is affirmed by the Anabaptists.”

<sup>2</sup> The alterations were made in compliance with the advice of some foreign divines, especially of Calvin. This divine was far from inculcating that narrow spirit which afterwards distinguished the advocates of the Geneva platform. “He also highly approved that there should be a certain form of prayer and ecclesiastical rites; from which it should not be lawful for the pastors themselves to depart,” &c.—FULLER.

<sup>3</sup> The form of discipline prepared for the church of England, which is ascribed almost entirely to archbishop Cranmer, is known by the title of “**Refor-**

trines of the reformers had been but partially received, nor had they had time to manifest their fruits in a national reformation of manners; a seed, however, was sown by their labours, afterwards to bear abundant fruit. Yet, such was the dispensation of Providence, that by their sufferings in the succeeding reign, the reformers made a deeper impression upon the nation, and more commended their principles to their attention, than by all their exertions in this and the preceding reign.

The awful visitation was now at hand, which was to try them with fire, and make all their adversaries rejoice. The young king, whose health had long been declining, was taken away from the fond expectations of the good, in July of this year, in the sixteenth year of his age. Some of his last words which are recorded, were: "Lord God, deliver me out of this miserable and wretched life, and take me among thy chosen: howbeit, not my will but thine be done! Lord, I commit my spirit unto thee; yet for thy chosen's sake, send me life and health that I may truly serve thee. O my Lord God, bless my people, and save thine inheritance. O Lord God, save thy chosen people of England, defend this realm from papistry, and maintain thy true religion, that I and my people may praise thy holy name, for Jesus Christ his sake." Seeing some about him, he seemed troubled that they were so near and had heard him; but with a pleasant countenance, he declared he had been praying to God. Soon after, he said to Sir Henry Sidney, who was holding him in his arms, "I am faint: Lord have mercy on me, and receive my spirit!" He then expired<sup>1</sup>.

The last duty which the archbishop, who was soon to exchange his mitre for the crown of martyrdom, was allowed to perform, was to officiate at his funeral, which he performed, though with some opposition, after the ritual of the church of England<sup>2</sup>.

Though the popish party in England would naturally take part with Mary, the eldest daughter of Henry VIII., the Protestants of Norfolk and Suffolk were the first who openly espoused her cause; and they thought it a point of duty, as she was the lawful heir. They say, in their supplication, "We

*matio Legum Anglicarum;*" and though it has been adjudged by some as carrying ecclesiastical authority too high, yet we are happy to find, that the capital punishment of heresy was not to be retained; the injustice of which measure some other Protestant churches were much slower to perceive.

<sup>1</sup> Burnet.

<sup>2</sup> Strype.

protest before God, we think if the holy Word of God had not taken some root amongst us, we could not have done that poor duty of ours, which was done, in assisting the queen, our most dear sovereign, against her grace's mortal foe that then sought her destruction ; it was our bounden duty ; and we thank God for his word and grace, that we then did some part of our bounden service." Others, however, of the leading reformers, were drawn into the scheme of the Duke of Northumberland, to set up the Lady Jane Grey — no doubt for fear of a popish successor, who would overturn the reformation ; but as there was then no law to exclude a Papist from the throne, their conduct was without excuse. The furious Knox, one of the popular preachers in England, went further, and making his own interpretations of Scripture to be law, proclaimed aloud against the government of all women, as a " monster in nature."

The nation very generally sided with the legal heir. Mary had promised to the men of Suffolk and Norfolk, that she would not alter the established religion ; and after her accession, declared by a proclamation, that she would force no one's conscience. But in her bigoted zeal for the papacy, and for what she considered to be necessary to the eternal salvation of her people, all these promises were soon forgotten. Nor was it to be expected, upon the acknowledged principles of that religion, that a Roman Catholic, having the power, could act otherwise ; for it was maintained, that " no engagements against the interests of Holy Church were binding"—" that there was no salvation out of the pale of that communion"—" that it was accordingly the duty which rulers owed to God, for the good of their subjects' souls, to reduce them to conformity, even by the severest punishments." If it must be confessed, that some measures of government, in the late reign, savoured of this last maxim, these were very far from being the principles of reformation. There were none of its esteemed writers but held the sanctity of an oath or a promise, though it were to their own injury. They did not lay it down as a principle, that there was no salvation out of their own respective communions ; and although their opponents objected to them, that they held — what amounted to the same — that none but the elect could be saved, this was a totally different principle in practice ; for they did not presume to know the secret decrees of God ; much less could they suppose that by civil penalties they could compel people to become of the number of the elect ; or that, to save their souls, they must of necessity be subject to

their spiritual authority: they did not confine salvation to the pale of their churches. They had, however, so far assimilated with the Roman Catholics, that they thought where the governments of states or cities embraced their religion, they were bound to provide instructors, to order the public profession of religion according to what they conceived to be the truth of God's Word, and to protect the same by civil penalties. Most of them also thought with the Papists, that the teaching of fundamental errors was to be restrained, as blasphemy against God; and that the promulgators of the same should be treated as a sort of poisoners of the soul. They argued, besides, that as part of the Roman superstition was idolatry, it ought not to be publicly allowed.

But, notwithstanding these false inferences, and the general barbarity of the age, the conduct of the reformers, when in power, towards the subject Papists, was very different from the conduct of the Papists towards them, when their circumstances were reversed. The great distinction, however, to be observed, is this: the principles of the reformers admitted, and must have drawn after them, a toleration of dissent from the religion of the majority or governing part of society — at least where no seditious principles were involved, as in the case of some of the Anabaptists; or political crime, as maintaining with the Papists the temporal authority of the bishop of Rome. But the principles of the Papists, when authority was in their hands, never could admit of any toleration, or even leave undisturbed the consciences of private persons; nor were the heads of their church at all scrupulous to avow this. The only hope, therefore, of the people of England, at this juncture, was in the legislature; but such was the divided state of the nation, or such their indifference to religion, and so great was the preponderating influence of the crown, that the houses of parliament, secured in their possession of the property spoiled from the church, suffered themselves to be moulded entirely by the will of the sovereign.

The first measure of the queen was to inhibit all preaching. The deprived popish bishops were next restored to their sees. Gardiner, the head of their party, was made lord chancellor, and under his cruel administration, assisted by Bonner, bishop of London, the persecution that followed was conducted.

Bradford and Rogers, two preachers much beloved in London, were taken into custody, merely from the discovery they had made of their influence over the people, in sheltering, at St. Paul's Cross, a popish preacher from their violence; and a man

of Suffolk, for too boldly reminding the queen of her promise, was made to stand for three days in the pillory, as having "defamed the queen."

It had been the resolve of many of the Protestant clergy, that it was their duty, notwithstanding the inhibition, not to cease to preach and teach the people, and meekly to abide the consequences. Several were apprehended for disobeying the order of council, among whom were Hooper, bishop of Gloucester, and Coverdale, bishop of Exeter. The archbishop was slandered, that he had set up the mass at Canterbury, which led him in a most public manner to contradict the report; and at the same time he issued a challenge, that, with the assistance of Peter Martyr and a few more, he would maintain, by disputation with any man, the reformation made under king Edward. Many urged the archbishop to flee; but he thought himself bound in duty to stop. He and Latimer were called before the council on the thirteenth of September, and were afterwards committed to the Tower; thither the archbishop of York was sent in the October following, and his goods seized, for he alone among all the reformers was rich.

A parliament met on the fifth of that month. Most of the Protestant bishops were now in prison. Taylor, bishop of Lincoln, and Harley, bishop of Hereford, however, appeared in their places; but when the mass was performed, they were thrust out of the house, for refusing to do reverence. In the convocation, the popish bishops entirely prevailed, though Philpot, Haddon, Aylmer, and one or two more, openly disputed against them. In the second session of parliament, all the laws passed in the reign of king Edward, respecting religion, were repealed; and the princess Elizabeth was declared illegitimate. Cranmer and others were attainted; but the parliament having discovered their disapprobation of the proposed match of the queen with Philip, the son of Charles V., was hastily dissolved. Many had now fled into exile, and the archbishop from his prison advised flight. Among those that fled were Poynt, bishop of Winchester, and the bishops of Bath, Chichester, and Ossory, to the number of eight hundred of the clergy in all, besides many hundreds of laymen of all ranks. These were kindly received in many Protestant towns on the Continent. Peter Martyr, who was one of these exiles, wrote to Calvin concerning "the bishops and learned godly divines that were cast into jails, and likely to suffer death for the Gospel, especially since Gardiner, bishop of Winchester, a man of a severe and cruel disposition, now managed all church



matters," "that although the infirmity of some betrayed them, yet great was the constancy of far more than he could have thought; so that he doubted not England would have many famous martyrs." "But there was one thing," says Mr. Strype, "that had something very remarkable in it, which he on this occasion communicated to Calvin, 'that even in this dismal prospect of misery and persecution, it was the judgment of almost all, that this reign would not last long; and that they were wise men who had no light conjectures thereof.'"

Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer, were removed<sup>1</sup> from the Tower to the prisons at Oxford, and brought to a mock disputation before the University, respecting the corporeal presence and the sacrifice of the mass. The archbishop and Ridley ably contended for the doctrine of the reformation, on two several days; the Papists proclaimed their triumph by hissing and laughter. On the third day, Latimer was brought forth, now a feeble old man of eighty years of age. He told them "he was not able to dispute; but he would tell them his faith, and then they might do as they pleased." "He thought the presence of Christ in the sacrament was only spiritual, since it is that by which we obtain eternal life, which flows only by Christ's abiding in us by faith; therefore it is not a bare naked sign;—but, for the corporeal presence, he looked on it as the root of all the other errors in their church." Perceiving they laughed at him, he told them, "they were to consider his great age, and to think what they might be when they came to it." He said "his memory was gone, but his faith was grounded on the Word of God," &c.

On the twenty-eighth of April, they were brought again into St. Mary's church, and for refusing their subscriptions were condemned as obstinate heretics. The archbishop replied: "From this your sentence I appeal to the just judgment of Almighty God, trusting to be present with Him in heaven for whose presence on the altar I am thus condemned." Bishop Ridley answered: "Although I be not of your company, yet I doubt not my name is written in another place, whither this sentence will send us sooner than we should by the course of nature have come." Old Latimer said, "I thank God most heartily that he hath prolonged my life to this end, that I may in this case glorify God with this kind of death."

After a solemn procession, in which the Papists carried about their "strange gods,"—the consecrated host—the three prelates

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 1564.



were conveyed back to their respective prisons, and their servants were discharged, to prevent all communication from without. The scholars of the University, it is remarked, were universally set against them; but many of the faithful, in different parts of the kingdom, made them the particular objects of their care, and amply supplied all their wants. Like the primitive Christians, they saw in these his imprisoned members, their Redeemer himself imprisoned, and forgot not to minister unto him.

The same farce that had been acted at Oxford, was designed to be repeated at Cambridge, whither the bishops and clergy in the different prisons in London were to be sent down, for another triumph of the Papists; but the former having got intelligence of the design, and knowing how the archbishop and his fellow-prisoners had been treated at Oxford, resolved not to agree to a disputation intended merely to insult them, and therefore begged to be heard before the council or parliament. To this effect they drew up a paper, signed by Hooper, bishop of Gloucester, Farrar, bishop of St. David's, and Coverdale, bishop of Exeter, the Doctors Taylor and Crome, and also by Philpot, Bradford, Saunders, Rogers, and Lawrence<sup>1</sup>. In this paper, they state their reasons for refusing to dispute, except in writing, and subjoin a short confession of their faith<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 1554, May 8.

<sup>2</sup> "That the Scriptures, the true Word of God, was the only judge of all controversies of religion; and that the Church is to be obeyed as long as she follows this Word:—that they believe the Apostles' Creed; and those creeds set out by the councils of Nice, Constantinople, Ephesus, and Chalcedon, and by the first and fourth councils of Toledo; and the symbols of Athanasius, Irenæus, Tertullian, and Damasus."—"We believe and confess concerning justification, that it cometh only from God's mercy through Christ; so it is perceived and had of none which be of years of discretion otherwise than of faith only: which faith is not an opinion, but a certain persuasion wrought by the Holy Ghost in the mind and heart of man. Wherethrough as the mind is illuminated, so the heart is supplied to submit itself to the will of God unfeignedly, and so sheweth forth an inherent righteousness which is to be discerned in the article of justification from the righteousness which God endueth us withal in justifying us, although inseparably they go together. And this we do not for curiosity or contention's sake, but for conscience' sake, that it might be quiet; which it can never be, if we confound, without distinction, forgiveness of sin and Christ's justice imputed to us with regeneration and inherent righteousness. By this we disallow the papistical doctrines of free will, of works of supererogation, of merits, of the necessity of auricular confession, and satisfaction to God-ward." They heartily desire all men to enter into no sedition or rebellion against the queen; "but, where they cannot obey but they must disobey God, there to submit themselves with all patience and humility, to suffer as the will and pleasure of the higher powers shall adjudge."—STRYPE'S *Mem.* vol. vii. Append. No. XVII.

In this year the queen was married to Philip, prince of Spain, and cardinal Pole was received as legate from the pope. In her writs to the sheriffs for the election of knights and burgesses for the ensuing parliament, which was to meet in November, the queen requires that "they be of the Catholic sort;" and such indeed they proved, for the commons in this parliament were more subservient than the other house, in falling into all the measures of the court. They were now, with the convocation, formally absolved, and reconciled to the pope; and having first been satisfied that they should not be disturbed in their possession of the abbey lands and the spoils of the church, they restored the laws against heretics, and gave up their late bishops and pastors to be dealt with as their enemies should choose. Mr. Strype has, however, recorded the names of thirty-nine of the lower house, who absented themselves wholly from this parliament. The queen ordered a general thanksgiving on this great occasion; the common people, as a "token of their joy and gladness," were to have "bonfires in all places." The population of London did not, it seems, enter into these feelings. When the queen rode in state through the metropolis with king Philip, the chancellor, and Pole, there were few expressions of joy at the sight of the king and queen; and the cardinal who rode, attired in red, with his cross before him, giving his blessing as he proceeded, was an object of laughter, which drew from the mortified Gardiner the exclamation, with many threats: "Such sort of heretics who ever saw!!" But their imprisoned pastors and preachers were at the same time the object of their great attention, and were abundantly supplied with every comfort of which their situation would admit.

The papacy, however, was now to shew itself, according to the awful symbol in the Apocalypse, "drunken with the blood of the saints and of the martyrs of Jesus." The legislature of England had given their power into the legate's hand, in re-enacting the old laws against heresy; and on the twenty-eighth of January, 1555, the cardinal granted a commission to the bishop of Winchester and divers other bishops, to sit upon and judge all those ministers and others who were in prison for heresy. On the same day this commission began to sit in the church of St. Mary Overy, on Hooper, late bishop of Gloucester, John Rogers, who had been prebendary of St. Paul's and vicar of St. Sepulchre's in London, Rowland Taylor, doctor of laws, who had been chaplain to archbishop Cranmer, and Lawrence Saunders, rector of Allhallows in Bread-street, by the gift of the same prelate.

They had already been examined several times before the popish persecutors; but now they had power to condemn, and deliver them to the secular arm.

On the following day, both the bishop and Rogers heard the sentence of their condemnation, which assigned them to the flames. They were commanded to be taken into a prison called the Clink, near the bishop of Winchester's house, and after dark to be conveyed to Newgate. They were conducted thither in the custody of the two sheriffs of London, who were at the pains to have the lights extinguished in certain shops in their way, that their passage might be concealed: this, however, could not prevent the collection of a concourse of people, who encouraged them with their prayers and blessings.

For six days they lay in Newgate, expecting the warrant for their execution. On the morning of the fourth of February, Mr. Rogers was awaked from his sleep, and told he must prepare for burning. The popish bishop Bonner was ready below to degrade him from his priesthood. Mr. Rogers asked of him one favour—to see his wife and children; but this last charity, hardly ever refused to the worst of criminals, was denied. He was immediately delivered to the sheriffs, to be conducted to Smithfield. On his way, he saw the objects of his earthly solicitude—his wife and eleven children, one still at the breast: so many tender ties had this faithful martyr to burst, in order to bear his testimony! He was asked by one of the sheriffs, if he would “revoke his abominable doctrine?” Rogers replied, “That which I have preached I will seal with my blood.” The stern reply was: “Thou art a heretic;” to which he meekly answered,—“That will be known at the day of judgment;” and with admirable patience and fortitude he endured the terrible punishment.

Mr. Rogers had been brought to the knowledge of the truth, by his acquaintance abroad with Tindal and Coverdale. Coverdale was united with him in his bonds, but through the great interest made in his favour by the king of Denmark, had been permitted to leave the kingdom.

At the same time with Mr. Rogers, bishop Hooper was made to undergo the ceremony of degradation, expecting to be led forth with him; but he was remanded to his cell. That night he got secret intelligence from his keeper, that it had been resolved to send him down to suffer in his own city of Gloucester; at which he was much rejoiced, and praised God that he was permitted, among the people of his late pastoral charge, to confirm by his death the truths he had taught them; for what was meant

by his persecutors to be a terrifying example to his people, he saw in a very different point of view. At four o'clock on the following morning, he was roused from his bed, and delivered to six of the queen's guards, to be taken towards the appointed scene of his sufferings. They avoided generally the inns where the bishop was known, and on Thursday evening arrived at Gloucester. About a mile from the city, a concourse of people were assembled, who loudly bewailed his fate—a circumstance which alarmed the guards so much, that one of their body rode hastily into the city for assistance. The bishop seemed quite undisturbed, and was much in prayer. To a friend who had waited upon him and urged him “to consider that life is sweet and death is bitter, and, therefore, seeing life may be had, desire to live, for life hereafter may do good:” “Indeed,” replied the bishop, “it is true, I am come here to suffer death because I will not gainsay the truth I have formerly preached in this diocese;”—“and death is bitter and life is sweet: but, alas! consider that death to come is more bitter, and life to come more sweet.” “I have settled myself, through the strength of God's Holy Spirit, patiently to pass through the torments and extremities of the fire now prepared for me, rather than deny the truth of his Word. Do you and others commend me to God's mercy in your prayers.” “Well, my lord,” said Mr. Kingston, for that was his name, “then I perceive there is no remedy, and therefore I take my leave of you; and I thank God that I ever knew you, for God did appoint you to call me, being a lost child,” &c. The bishop shed a profusion of tears when he parted from him, and told him that all the troubles he had suffered in prison, had not caused him to utter so much sorrow.

A poor blind boy, who some time before had been imprisoned in Gloucester, for confessing the truth, contrived by much entreaty with the guards, to get to speak with the bishop. The bishop, after learning from him the cause of his sufferings, and having heard the confession of the boy's faith, beholding him steadfastly, though with eyes that could scarcely retain their tears, said to him, “Ah, poor boy, God has taken from thee thy outward sight, for what reason he best knoweth; but he hath given thee another sight much more precious; for he hath endued thy soul with the eye of knowledge and faith!” After that, another came to him, whom he knew to be a Papist and a wicked man, who expressed his sorrow to see him thus: “Be sorry for thyself,” was the reply, “and lament thine own wickedness; for I

am well, I thank God, and death to me for Christ's sake is welcome."

When the sheriffs of Gloucester received the prisoner from the guards, they determined to lodge him for the night in the common jail of the city, called Northgate; but the bishop's conduct had so wrought upon the soldiers who had brought him from London, that they made most earnest intercession for him, describing "how meekly and quietly he had conducted himself by the way;" they said "that any child might keep him well enough, and that they would rather stay and watch him, than that he should be sent to the common jail." The request of his softened keepers was listened to, and the sheriffs agreed to let him remain where he was, and watch him there. He begged that he might go to bed betimes, saying he had many things to remember. He retired at five, and slept one sound sleep, and then spent the rest of the night in prayer. He entreated in the morning, that he might be alone till the hour of execution should arrive. At nine o'clock he received the summons. It was calculated that seven thousand people had assembled, it being market day, to see the awful spectacle. "Alas!" said he, "why are these people assembled and come together? peradventure, they think to hear something of me now, as they have in times past; but, alas! speech is prohibited me;—notwithstanding, THE CAUSE of my death is well known unto them."

The reader may be spared the minute account which is left of the awful preparation for this most cruel of all punishments, which was chosen to shake the constancy of the martyrs of Jesus. In bishop Hooper's case there seemed to concur every thing that could protract his sufferings—insufficient fuel—its improper condition—and even the elements, which seemed hostile in the state of the wind:—but not so the Lord of the elements! for the patient endurance of no martyr was more remarked. "He died as quietly," says the martyrologist, "as a child in his bed;" and "there was no expression of extreme distress in his cry, when, after the second fire had been spent in vain, he said: 'For God's love, good people, let me have more fire!' Indeed, he went not to the severe trial in his own strength; in his last prayer these words were noted: 'Well seest thou, my Lord and God, what terrible pains and cruel torments be prepared for thy creature; such, Lord, as without thy strength none is able to bear, or patiently to pass. But all things that are impossible with man, are possible with thee; therefore strengthen me of thy goodness,

that in the fire I break not the rules of patience ; or else, assuage the terror of the pains, as shall seem most to thy glory.’”

About the same time, and in a similar manner, Doctor Rowland Taylor was taken down and burnt on a common in the neighbourhood of his church at Hadley, in Suffolk, that he might die in the sight of his people. When he attempted to speak to them, he was reprimanded and struck ; those, however, who conversed with him, testified that “ they did never see in him the fear of death.”

Lawrence Saunders was also sent to be executed in the immediate neighbourhood of Coventry. He was naturally a man of a mild and timorous spirit, but when brought to the trial, he stood when some bolder fell. A poor shoemaker whom he had known, getting access to him in Coventry, thus addressed him : “ O my good master, God strengthen and comfort you !” “ Gramercies ! good shoemaker,” said Mr. Saunders, “ I pray thee to pray for me, for I am the unmeetest man for this high office that ever was appointed to it ; but my gracious God and dear Father is able to make me strong enough !” When he approached the place of his execution, after lying prostrate in prayer, he arose and embraced the stake to which he was to be chained, saying : “ Welcome the cross of Christ ! Welcome everlasting life !” In the death of this martyr is noted again the use of “ green wood, and other smothering, rather than burning fuel.” We cannot but suspect that this was from a general order of the persecutors in power, and was intended to make the example of their deaths more terrifying : perhaps, in their tender mercies, they thought the fewer examples would be necessary !

The wiser members of the government began, however, about this time, to dread the personal odium that attached to these cruelties. King Philip’s confessor was made to blame them in a sermon he preached in his presence ; for the public voice accused the Spaniard. The chancellor, Gardiner, would be no more personally concerned in the condemnation of heretics ; but the persecution by no means relaxed, nor was that his intention ; the resentful Bonner and other zealous Papists were ready to go on with the work, and it was conducted accordingly with greater severity if possible, and with greater insult to the sufferers, than ever. We may generally distinguish the following year — “ the year 1555, as a bloody year ; and many honest people, both of the clergy and laity, were burnt alive, in all parts ; insomuch that the mind cannot but shrink at the remembrance thereof<sup>1</sup>.”

<sup>1</sup> Strype.



The limits of this work forbid a minute detail of these sufferers; every station in life almost had its martyrs, and the simplicity of the poor, no less than the understanding of the more educated, was strengthened against all the temptations and rage of the persecutors. The constancy of the martyrs was such, that a persuasion could not but go abroad that they were miraculously supported against the fear and pains of death. Farrar, bishop of St. David's, who was sent to suffer at Carmarthen<sup>1</sup>, for an example to Wales, was emboldened to say to a friend: "If you see me once stir in the midst of the burning, give no credit to my doctrine;" and he continued unmoved till he was half burnt, when he was struck down with a staff.

Mr. Hawkes, a gentleman and courtier, who was brought to the same death, had agreed to give his friends a sign, by holding up his hands over his head before he gave up the ghost, "if he found the pains of such burning were not greater than that a man might keep therein his mind quiet and patient:" the expected token was seen. When many thought he had expired, he lifted up his hands, burning with flame, and clapped them three times above his head.

The source whence this constancy of the martyrs did indeed spring, is strikingly illustrated by the account of a Mr. Robert Glover, who was one of the sufferers for religion in this reign. After he had been condemned, he complained to his friend Augustin Bernher, of his deep depression of mind, "desolate of all spiritual consolation, and full of much discomfort to bear the bitter cross of martyrdom ready to be laid upon him. He feared "lest the Lord had utterly withdrawn his favour from him; he had prayed day and night and could find no comfort." His friend exhorted and encouraged him to play the man in the good cause; and notwithstanding his distressing feelings, expressed his confidence that the Lord would visit him in his good time; and desired him to let him know "when any such feeling of God's mercies should begin to touch his soul." He departed from him for the night. "The next day, the day of his suffering, as Mr. Glover was going to the place of execution, and had come within sight of the stake — although all the night long he had prayed for strength and courage, he could find none — on a sudden, he was so mightily replenished with comfort and heavenly joys, that he cried out to Bernher, 'Austin, he is come! he is come!' and proceeded with such joy and alacrity, that he seemed more like one who had risen from some deadly danger to the

<sup>1</sup> Strype.



enjoyment of life, than to one passing out of the world by any pains of death. Such was the change of the marvellous working of God's hand upon this good man<sup>1</sup>."

Margaret Polley is mentioned as the first woman who suffered in the flames, though several suffered afterwards. She was burnt in the month of July, at Tunbridge, in Kent<sup>2</sup>.

The archbishop's diocese of Canterbury supplied many martyrs. For a particular description of these several scenes of barbarity, and of the patience of the saints, "counted like sheep for the slaughter," I must refer to Fox's Book of Martyrs, the writing and circulation of which has tended so much to the everlasting disgrace of the papacy. I shall only notice the deaths of the three great public men so eminently instrumental in bringing about that reformation which these cruelties could not stop, but rather advanced, by the examples of patience which they exhibited. These were Ridley, bishop of London; Latimer, some time of Worcester; and Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury; whose names will be remembered as long as the Church of England stands, with peculiar respect and veneration. These truly Christian bishops were still confined at Oxford. Ridley thus writes to a friend: "Since I heard of our dear brother Rogers's stout confession of Christ and his truth, even unto the death, my heart, blessed be God, rejoiced for it; and since that time, I say, I never felt any lumpish heaviness in my heart, as I grant I have felt some times before." So far was the death of that first of the Marian martyrs from intimidating the rest! When brought forth to be examined by the commission that condemned him, inasmuch as it was in the pope's name, bishop Ridley openly denied its authority, and refused to give it willingly any token of respect. The poor and aged appearance of bishop Latimer, which ought to have excited commiseration and reverence, seemed to make him the butt of ridicule to the audience—which drew from him this reflection: "Why, my masters, this is no laughing matter: I answer upon life and death! Woe unto you that laugh now, for ye shall weep!" When a reflection was made on his learning, interrupting the speaker, he said, "Lo, you look for learning at my hands, who have gone so long to the school of oblivion, marking the bare walls of my library, keeping so long in prison without book, or pen and ink; and now you let me loose to come and answer to articles!" He begged not to trouble them with a second day's

<sup>1</sup> Fox and Strype.

<sup>2</sup> Fox.

examination, saying, "I am at a point." On the following day both persisted in their answers; the ceremony of degradation from the priesthood followed next. To the offer of mercy on submission to the pope, bishop Ridley gave this resolute answer: "I marvel that you will trouble me with any such vain and foolish talk; you know my mind concerning the usurped authority of that Romish antichrist," &c. When bishop Ridley heard his condemnation, he thanked God that "none of them was able to lay to his charge any open or notorious crime." They told him, "he played the part of a proud pharisee, exalting and praising himself." "No, no, no," said the bishop, "as I have said before, to God's glory be it spoken: I confess myself to be a miserable, wretched sinner, and have great need of God's help and mercy, and do daily call and cry for the same."

At the mayor's house, where he was kept the night before he suffered, he spoke, at supper, of the following day, as the day of his marriage. "My breakfast shall be somewhat sharp and painful, yet I am sure my supper shall be more pleasant and sweet." When they arose from table, his brother offered to watch all night with him; but he said, "No, no, that you shall not; for I intend, God willing, to go to bed, and sleep as quietly to-night as ever I did in my life!"

The place prepared for the execution, was on the north of the city, opposite Baliol College. As the procession passed by the prison called Bocardo, where archbishop Cranmer was confined, bishop Ridley looked earnestly, hoping to see him at the window; but the archbishop was at the moment engaged in disputation, and being too late, could only look after him when he had passed. When he arrived at the place of execution, Latimer, who had followed him as fast as his feeble age would permit, ran to him and embraced him, and said, "Be of good heart, brother, for God will either assuage the fury of the flame, or else strengthen us to abide it." They prayed and conversed together, but none were near who would report what was said. A popish doctor then preached a sermon from the text, "Though I give my body to be burned," &c. When it was over, Ridley said to Latimer, "Will you begin to answer the sermon, or shall I?" Latimer said: "Begin you first, I pray you." "I will," said Ridley. This, however, was not permitted; they were not allowed to speak, unless they would recant. "Well," said bishop Ridley, "as long as the breath is in my body, I will never deny my Lord Christ and his known truth: God's will be done." With that he arose, and said with a loud voice: "Well,

then, I commit our cause to Almighty God, who will indifferently judge all." Latimer added, in a saying very frequently on his lips: "Well, there is nothing hid but it shall be opened." He said "he could answer the preacher well enough if he might be suffered."

They were immediately ordered to prepare. Bishop Ridley would have retained more of his dress; "No," said Latimer, "it will put you to more pain, and it will do a poor man good." "Well, be it so," said Ridley, "in the name of God!" and mounting the stone, he held up his hands and said: "O heavenly Father! I give unto thee most hearty thanks, for that thou dost call me to be a professor of thee even unto death. I beseech thee, Lord God, take mercy on this realm of England, and deliver the same from all its enemies." Looking at the smith fixing the irons, he said: "Good fellow, knock it hard, for the flesh will have its course." They first brought a lighted faggot and laid it at bishop Ridley's feet, when Latimer said to him: "Be of good comfort, and play the man: we shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out." With a voice remarkably loud, as the flames reached him, Ridley exclaimed, "Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit!" and often repeated: "Lord, Lord, receive my spirit!" To the same effect Latimer prayed as earnestly on the other side of the stake. The little life that was left to the poor old man, was very soon extinguished. To bishop Ridley it was different, through the ill structure of the fire, and the mistaken offices of a friend to relieve him. The request, "Let the fire come to me, I cannot burn!" mingled with the cry, "Lord, have mercy upon me!" came from the fire: but no relenting cries! no lamentations of bitter grief!

It could not escape the notice of the suffering people of God, who were fully convinced in their minds that God will avenge his murdered saints, that the same day on which Ridley and Latimer were committed to the flames, Gardiner, bishop of Winchester and lord chancellor, was struck at dinner with a very painful disease, which in a few weeks ended his earthly career<sup>1</sup>.

It was reported that he had delayed that dinner till he should receive the news, by a special messenger, that the flames were kindled at Oxford. He had great remorse for his former life, and the popish bishop Day would have comforted him with the words of Christ's promise, and with "free justification in the

<sup>1</sup> October 21.

blood of Christ," repeating the Scriptures to him. "What! my lord," said Gardiner, "would you open that gap now? then farewell altogether. To me and such others in my case, you may speak it; but open that window to the people, then farewell all together<sup>1</sup>."

This is very like the conduct of many who know the doctrine of "free justification" to be contained in Scripture, but interpose their human policy, to prevent the mischief of the knowledge of God's own truth among the people. But it was very true, as this sagacious politician observed, if this doctrine got abroad, then farewell to all that scheme which he and his fellow Papists were taking such pains to restore. He died on the 12th of November following, often repeating in his illness: "With Peter I have erred, but not with Peter have I wept<sup>2</sup>."

Burnet remarks of the parliament which met at the end of this year, "that it was now much changed; men's minds were much alienated from the popish clergy and also from the queen." No doubt, the love of that religion which *they* persecuted, had its influence in the minds of some few; but it was chiefly the old jealousy for the wealth of the clergy, which was reviving. The persecution, however, did not relax; and in the following spring, the fellers approached the tallest tree of the forest.

For the condemnation of the archbishop, a special commission had been procured from Rome, whither by a mock citation he had been summoned, and declared "contumacious" for not appearing. "There he" — the pope — "sitting in the throne of justice, and having before his eyes God alone, who is the righteous Lord, and judgeth the world in righteousness, did make this definitive sentence, pronouncing and decreeing the said Thomas Cranmer to be found guilty of the crime of heresy and other excesses." Mention is made of his "bringing in again the heresy abjured by Berengarius, of his believing the false and heretical doctrines of Wickliff and Luther, those arch-heretics, &c.; therefore the pope excommunicated him, and deprived him of his archbishopric, and delivered him over to the secular court." This bore date December 14.

The commissioners of the pope proceeded with this decree to Oxford, and first degraded the archbishop, decking him with the popish garments. He observed he "had done with that gear long ago;" for he did not consider the simple and ancient garments retained in the Church of England, as having any

<sup>1</sup> Fox and Burnet.

<sup>2</sup> Burnet.

affinity to the gaudy dresses of the Romish priests. When they proceeded to take from his hand the crosier, he held it fast, and produced an appeal to the next general council, which of course was not regarded. Bonner at the same time insulted him on his fall. The archbishop addressed to the queen a vindication of his supposed errors, which she committed to cardinal Pole to be answered. This only renewed the old controversy. The cardinal had no new arguments to bring, though he pronounced the archbishop “wilfully blind and ignorant”—“under the vengeance of God”—“a member of Satan and damned.” When the archbishop challenged him to produce one single doctor who, for the first thousand years after Christ, had spoken in favour of transubstantiation, Pole affected not to notice the expression of “the first thousand years,” and proceeded to his Papal authorities. Mr. Strype’s reflection seems to be very just, that the cardinal’s letter “savoured of a great deal of malice and mortal hatred against him.” This historian attributes to him the counsels that brought Cranmer to his death.

The archbishop, in these circumstances, would of course be much the glory and boast of the reformers. Who could doubt of *his* fortitude, who had so often braved death in defence of the truth? And when so many had been found faithful, and women, and almost children, could not be intimidated by the fiery trial, who could suppose that this great pillar would stoop? But—(“that no man should glory in man”)—it pleased God to shew him weak, before he shewed him strong. The fallen dignitary had to say, “Like Peter I have erred!” but, through the grace of God, he could say also what Winchester could not, “Like Peter I have wept!”

What perfidious promises, as well as intimidations, were used, we know not; but we find him removed from prison, and taken to the dean’s house at Oxford, and there induced to subscribe. The first paper, perhaps, might seem but little; it was to this effect: “That as the legislature had received the pope’s authority, he was content to submit, and take the pope for the chief head of this church of England, as far as God’s laws would permit.” But here a good conscience was lost! and by six different subscriptions, one after another, he was led to deny his Master and his Word.

This permitted fall discovered not only the weakness of human nature in this devoted servant of God, but, what would hardly have been supposed, that it was not a mistaken conscience, but a spirit of revenge and murderous hate, that influenced his perse-

tutors ! The queen and cardinal had pretended that they were actuated in all these punishments which they inflicted, only by a zeal for religion — that they wished more for the conversion than the death of their victims ; but their determination still to execute the cruel sentence, notwithstanding the recantation, manifested to all, that other motives, besides a mistaken zeal, influenced their minds. The queen had expressly forgiven what was deemed the political delinquency of Cranmer ; and besides, in her father's days, he had saved her life, when not one of the other counsellors durst appear as her advocate. In Pole's mind there is some cause to fear a more dreadful hardening still. He had at one time been favourable to the reformers abroad, and seemed to have “ tasted the good Word of God ;” so that some who had expressed their sanguine hopes concerning him, were covered with shame when they heard of him as a persecutor in England.

As for the poor fallen archbishop, he was restored to more than the usual constancy of a martyr. In his prayer we see the stable ground of his hope of mercy for his late dissimulation : “ O God the Son, thou wast not made man — this great mystery was not wrought—for few or small offences,” &c. Then he confessed before the people his dissimulation, with great profusion of tears — as “ the great thing that troubled his conscience, that for the fear of death he had written with his hand contrary to the truth which he thought in his heart.” “ Therefore,” he cried, “ my hand shall first be punished. If I may come at the fire, it shall be first burnt.” The enraged Papists, maddened by disappointment, dragged the archbishop from the stand on which they had placed him, and hurried him to the stake.

We have an account of his death, from the pen of a Papist who was present, in a letter to a friend, dated “ Oxford, March 23.” As what is written by such a person is, for obvious reasons, of more weight than the reports of most credible friends, I shall make my extracts entirely from that letter. “ Coming to the stake with a cheerful countenance and willing mind, he put off his garments with haste, and stood upright in his shirt.” “ When the Spanish friars saw his constancy, they said in Latin one to another — ‘ Let us go from him ; we ought not to be nigh him, for the devil is in him.’ ” “ Fire being now put to him, he stretched out his right hand and thrust it into the flame, and held it there a good space, before the fire came to any other part of his body, where his hand was seen of every man sensibly burning ; crying with a loud voice, ‘ *This hand hath*



*offended!!*<sup>^</sup> As soon as the fire got up, he was very soon dead, never stirring or crying all the while. His patience in torment, his courage in dying, if it had been taken either for the glory of God, the wealth of his country, or the testimony of truth, as it was for a pernicious error and subversive of true religion, I could worthily have commended the example, and matched it with the fame of any father of ancient time; but seeing that not the death, but the cause and quarrel thereof, commendeth the sufferer, I cannot but much dispraise his obstinate stubbornness and sturdiness in dying, and especially in so evil a cause. Surely his death much grieved every man." "His friends sorrowed for love; his enemies for pity; strangers for a common kind of humanity, whereby we are bound one to another<sup>1</sup>."

The next day after Cranmer was burnt<sup>2</sup>, cardinal Pole was consecrated archbishop of Canterbury; and until his death, and that of the queen, which happened both about the same time, towards the end of the year 1558, the persecution raged with unabating or rather with increasing violence; and such pains were taken to search out and bring the offenders to conviction, and to subject them to every species of torture, that the system of the Spanish Inquisition was in every respect introduced by the English government. A commission for a diligent search and discovery of heretics, was this year set forth, which begins with the words, "Forasmuch as divers devilish are clamorous," &c. Persons were sworn "to bring in the names of all suspected of heresy." It was directed, by a neighbouring justice, that every house in Colchester should be searched for strangers, "this place being a harbour for all the heretics, and ever was." Twenty-two persons, tied together in a string, were driven along, "like sheep to the shambles," from that place to London. Norfolk and Suffolk were still thought to be as much infected with heresy as Essex.

In the year 1557, the persecution still continued. Six were burnt in Canterbury at one fire; after that, five at Smithfield; then seven at Maidstone; seven at Canterbury; ten at Lewes; ten more at Colchester. Bishop Bonner's commissary writes thus on the latter occasion: "At Colchester, (where a little before, ten had been burnt) the rebels were stout—the parish priests were hemmed at in the open streets and called knaves; the sacrament blasphemed and reviled at, in every house and tavern; prayer and fasting not regarded; seditious talk and

<sup>1</sup> Fox, Strype's Cranmer, and Memorials.

<sup>2</sup> March 21, 1556.



noise were rife both in town and country, in as ample and large a manner as though there had been no honourable lords and commissioners sent for the reformation thereof." "This letter provoked much, and set the bloodhounds upon a new scent and search after good men and women; which ended in the burning of nine more in one day at Colchester<sup>1</sup>."

On the 28th of March, 1558, we find cardinal Pole issuing a new commission against the heretics, which opened a door to a great persecution in Kent this year<sup>2</sup>. July the 7th, he issued an instrument, called a *significavit*, to the king and queen, against certain heretics in his diocese; these were, John Cornford of Wrotham, Christopher Brown of Maidstone, John Hurst of Asheton, Katharine Knight of Thornham, and Alice Suoth or Snoth of Biddenden. They were burnt alive at Canterbury, November 10th, seven days before the deaths of the queen and cardinal, and were the last who were burnt in this reign. By a proclamation issued in June, all persons having heretical books, and not burning them without reading them, were to be executed by martial law.

All these cruelties, however, could not check the progress of the principles of the reformation; they spread more and more, and again the ancient proverb was verified — "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church." Those who loved the Gospel, still contrived to meet together in secret; in some places, Burnet tells us, to the number of two hundred persons. Nor had all their pastors fled, although they were the particular objects of the search of the popish government. He mentions particularly Scambler and Bentham, afterwards promoted by queen Elizabeth to the sees of Peterborough and Litchfield; Foule and Bernher, with Rough, who was afterwards burnt by Bonner. Mr. Strype mentions, in Kent, where religion had taken good footing, persons of the names of Woodgate, Maynard, and Harwich, who went about in that county, and preached in secret meetings of the Gospellers. He mentions also Ross, in London.

Besides these open professors of the Gospel, there were many who, though they complied outwardly with the papal religion and went to mass, were in their hearts convinced of the idolatry of that worship. The faithful Protestants animadverted with much severity and truth upon these refusers of the cross. Mr. Strype calculates that not above one-third of the nation were sincere Papists. He observes, respecting the execution of eleven

<sup>1</sup> Strype's Mem. vol. v. p. 198.

<sup>2</sup> Idem, p. 290.

men and two women, at Stratford le Bow, in Essex, that "there were present near twenty thousand people, as was thought, to see the execution, whose ends generally in coming there, and to such like executions, were to strengthen themselves in the profession of the Gospel, and to exhort and comfort those that were to die." He intimates also, that many dated their convictions of the truth of the Gospel, from these burnings of the martyrs, which they witnessed<sup>1</sup>.

Many congregations of Gospellers continued in London throughout this reign, from the beginning to the end of it, in spite of the hardships thereof, and notwithstanding the taking of so many of their numbers. There was one chief congregation above the rest, the pastor whereof was as *Superintendent*. In the last year of the queen, Thomas Bentham, lately an exile in Germany, and afterwards bishop of Litchfield, succeeded to this office. To a friend, the pastor of the English congregation at Arau, in Switzerland, he writes : " Whiles I was in Germany at liberty of body, havng sufficient for it for the time, I was yet many tymes in great gryef of mynd, and terrible torments of hell ; and now here beyng every moment of an hour in danger of takynd and fear of bodily death, I am in mynd, the Lord be prayed, most quiet and joyful seying the fervent zeal of so many, and such encrease of our congregation in the myddst of thys cruel and violent persecution. What shold I say but, It is the Lord's doing. There were seven men burned in Smithfield, the tweenty-eighth day of July, altogether ; a fearful and cruel proclamation beyng made, that under payn of present death, no man shold either approche ny unto theym, touche theym, nather speak unto nor comforte theym ; yet were they so mightily spoken unto, so comfortably taken by the hands, and so godly comforted, notwithstanding that fearful proclamation and the present threatnyngs of the sheriff and sergýants, that the adversaryes themselves were astoyned. And synce that tyme, the Byshop of London, either for fear or craft, carryed seven more, or six at least, forthe of his Cole-house to Fulham ;" " caused them to be carryed to Brane-ford besyde Syon ; where they were burned in post-haste the same night. This fact purchased hym more hatred than any that he had done, of the common multitude."

Such is the picture given us of the Protestant church of England at this period. They held their meetings clandestinely in London and its neighbourhood. " Sometimes it was at Black

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Strype, 1558.

Friars, at Sir Thomas Cardine's house." "Again, sometimes the meeting was somewhere about Aldgate; sometimes in a cloth-worker's loft, near the great Conduit in Cheapside. Once or twice in a ship at Billingsgate, belonging to a good man of Lee, in Essex. Sometimes at a ship called Jesus' ship, lying between Ratcliff and Rotherith: there twice or thrice till it came to be known. Othertimes in a cooper's house, in Pudden Lane. Sometimes in Thames Street, sometimes in Bow Church-yard, and sometimes in Islington, or in the fields thereabouts. These meetings were often in the night time. There would be in these assemblies forty, and sometimes an hundred or more met together; and towards the latter end of the queen, the number increased, though the malice of their enemies decreased not. At these meetings, they had collections for Christ's prisoners, and would gather sometimes ten pounds at a night-meeting. But they could not be so private, but that now and then they were discovered and taken. To some of these secret meetings resorted such as were spies and informers. One of this description, when among them, "cried them pardon, and was converted to become one of them."

In the North of England, also, there yet remained some faithful pastors and congregations, "as George Marsh, who suffered burning at Chester. In Yorkshire was Mr. Best, who was afterwards bishop of Carlisle. Brodbank, Reneses, Russel, and Jeffry Hurst, travelled from place to place in Lancashire and the neighbouring counties. In the bishopric of Durham was Bernard Gilpin, a near relation of the bishop; he had complied indeed, and conformed to the Romish church, but his preaching was felt to be Protestant, and his labours truly apostolical. Nothing but his connexions screened him, and by his means the seed of the Gospel was very widely dispersed in some very forsaken parts of the North.

The account of the numbers who perished in this persecution, is differently stated. Burnet makes the number consumed by fire, to be 284. Speed, from "Weaver's Monuments," makes the number 277. "In the heat of these flames were burnt to ashes five bishops, one and twenty divines, eight gentlemen, eighty-four artificers, and a hundred husbandmen, servants and labourers, twenty-six wives, twenty widows, nine virgins, two boys, and two infants; one of them whipped to death by Bonner, the other born at the stake and thrown into the flame with its mother." Lord Burghley reckons the number together of those that died by imprisonments, torments, famine, and fire, to be near 400;

the number burnt, 290<sup>1</sup>. Many lay in prison expecting the same fate, when the reign of Elizabeth commenced.

But it will be recollected, that a very considerable portion of those who, for their zeal or from situation, stood most exposed to the hostility of the Papists, had fled beyond the seas, at an early period of Mary's reign; and as the persecution became more inquisitorial, many more were afterwards added to their numbers.

The English exiles found but little hospitality in Saxony, and in the parts of Germany where Lutheranism was professed, "because they looked upon them as Sacramentaries, holding as Calvin and Peter Martyr did, in the doctrine of the sacrament;" a sad illustration of the uncharitable bigotry which at this time possessed them respecting their distinctive doctrine of consubstantiation. They even expelled them from their cities, and took great offence at private persons who harboured them. Philip Melancthon himself however partook not of their unchristian spirit; he interposed with the magistrates of Wesel, saying, "that these poor exiles ought not to be exploded with noise and hissing, but were to be retained and helped." He also wrote to the governor of Frankfort as follows: "That the English were not to be suppressed, but cherished, considering their sentiments were sound in the main articles of the Christian confession: and that whereas they differed in some points, they were to be instructed and informed, and not to be rudely thrown out from among them by force and violence."

But the reception of the exiles in all the churches of the reformed or Helvetian community, was very different; they were welcomed every where with great kindness and hospitality. Their numbers were great, and the poverty of some was extreme; but "God stirred up the bowels of the abler sort, both in England and in the parts where they sojourned, to pity and relieve them, by very liberal contributions conveyed to them from time to time. From London especially came often very large allowances; till Gardiner, who had his spies every where, got knowledge of it, and casting the benefactors into prison, and finding means to impoverish them, that channel of charity was in a great measure stopped. After this, the senators of Zurich, on the motion of Bullinger, their superintendent, opened their treasures unto them. Beside the great ornaments then of religion and learning, Melancthon, Calvin, Bullinger, Gualter, Lavater, Ges-

<sup>1</sup> See Strype's Mem.

ner, and others, sent them daily most comfortable letters, and omitted no duty of love and humanity to them all the time of their banishment. Some of the princes and persons of wealth sent also their benevolences." Of the exiles, some pursued their studies, some taught schools, wrote books, or assisted at the printing press; others took this opportunity to travel. Thus, many persons were preserved, who were afterwards eminent teachers and bishops in the church of England. Calvin writes to them, that "he doubted not but the Lord in his wonderful council would have them thus exercised in their studies of godly learning, under a shadow, that a little while after he might bring them forth into light and into serious warfare <sup>1</sup>."

The towns where they chiefly resided were, Frankfort and Strasburg, in the Upper Germany; Embden, in the Lower; and Geneva, Zurich, and Arau, in Switzerland.

At Frankfort, those unhappy dissensions manifested themselves, which were afterwards to cause so much division and destruction in the British churches. A regard for the rites and usages of the primitive church, before the corruptions of the papacy had defiled it, had much guided the reformers in England, in their regulation of the national worship. Its liturgical form, the ministration of its servants, the responses, whereby the people were made to take an audible part in the worship, and especially the ceremonious observance with which the holy mysteries of the Lord's supper were celebrated, gave an aspect to the public worship of the church of England, somewhat different from that of other churches of the Helvetic or reformed community. Among them, in general, every form and ceremony that bore any resemblance to those in use among the Roman Catholics, was for that reason rejected with a feeling of abhorrence. Why, in churches so popularly constructed, the people were so zealously prohibited from taking any part in the public worship—while the officiating minister, though he would wear no dress of ceremony, was to engross the whole to himself—is not easy to be accounted for, except that preaching having been sadly degraded among the Roman Catholics, it was now thought it could not be sufficiently exalted. The idolatry of the papal mass, it is easy to perceive, drove them into the other extreme respecting the ministration of the Lord's supper; they would sink it from the appearance of an act of worship, to almost that of a social feast. It cannot be doubted, however, that the notions of the earlier

<sup>1</sup> From Geneva.

Helvetian divines, respecting this sacrament, which made it a bare commemoration, and the words of its institution merely figurative, had a great influence in introducing this practice, so unlike the ancient practice up to the very highest antiquity. Most of the Helvetians at this time, indeed, allowed the "real presence," but they had made no alteration in the form of administering the holy mysteries.

It occurred most unhappily for the future peace and prosperity of the church of England, that some of her members, from their connexions, and long intercourse with the reformed churches on the Continent, became much enamoured of their style of worship. They had little regard to patriotism, if that term may be applied to the attachment which they might have felt to the institutions of their now persecuted church, although such an attachment is a useful virtue; and an inviolable observance of paternal institutions, has received the approbation of God himself in holy writ<sup>1</sup>. But these ministers, among whom stands very prominent, Mr. Knox, the Scottish reformer, whose zeal was ever tinged with no small degree of violence, were not content with a private preference, but were for re-modelling, as far as their influence could prevail, the whole worship of the church of England in the places of her banishment, where there were congregations of her exiles. Her communion they reviled as a "popish communion," or, at least, as "having a popish face." Knox, at Frankfort, where he was minister, refused to comply with the English liturgy, and slandered it "as a superstitious model, borrowed from the Papists." It would have been strange if these innovations had met with no opposition, and if none had been found among her exiles, who kept inviolate their love to the customs and ordinances of their captive church, and still cherished a respect for the memory of her fathers in England, at this time sealing with their blood the testimony they had borne against the corruptions of Rome! This was far from being the case; the innovators were strongly resisted, and, in particular, Knox was compelled to quit Frankfort.

That in this dispute, as in most others, where the feelings of men would be so much interested, moderate men should discern faults on both sides, in the management of the contest, was to be expected. But the friends of the church of England could not but approve this firm resistance as to its general object. Why

<sup>1</sup> Jer. xxxv.



should they prefer the wisdom of foreign divines, to that of the reformers of their own church, or hastily conclude, that what was thought convenient for the little republics of Switzerland and Germany, would necessarily be as suitable to the habits and customs of their own country, so differently circumstanced? Or why should they burst asunder the bond of union between themselves and multitudes in England, who venerated the reformation as it had been there introduced? Besides, none of the exiles despaired, at this period, of the restoration of the church of England to its national importance; and in the midst of foreign churches, they still considered themselves as members of her community. The congregational form of church government was not yet known among the reformers. In these circumstances, whatever improvements they persuaded themselves they had learned abroad, it was highly improper, and could but be mischievous, to introduce them in violation of the existing laws of their church, until, in more peaceful times, the consent of the public authority could be obtained.

A permanent division and separation took place, on these grounds, among the English exiles; and thus we see the further expansion and growth of those sentiments which were afterwards to divide the Protestants of England, and which have produced distractions and animosities, perhaps never to be healed till the Prince of Peace himself shall come. It is pleasant to observe, indeed, that there was no dispute about any fundamental doctrine of the faith, once pretended. A difference respecting the extent of subjection to the civil magistrate there was likely to be; for the reformers of king Edward's days had, like Luther and Tindal, taught, that subjection should be conscientiously observed by the church in all things not contrary to the Word of God; but if the ardent Knox was to serve as a specimen of the opposed party, rulers had to expect a very different carriage towards them from the heads of the ecclesiastical state.

But, if this dissension, so great in its consequences, contained no dispute about any doctrine of the Christian faith, there was another, which, arising from still smaller beginnings, began to shew itself among the English Protestants, and which bore upon a very important point in the mystery of the faith, and in after times, had a greater influence still upon the religion of the reformed church in most countries<sup>1</sup>.

This arose from the opinions of those persons who were at

<sup>1</sup> Strype's Mem. vol. iv. p. 420, &c.



this time called "Free-willers," and who were for introducing, on Protestant ground, doctrines similar to those of the Pelagians, or Semi-Pelagians, of a former age. Among the Anabaptists these sentiments had been usually held; but the reformers were almost all avowedly Augustinian on these points. The church of England, as we have seen, had, in the days of king Edward, treated the Free-willers as heretics. But among the prisoners for religion in queen Mary's reign, were found some of the same opinion, and exciting great zeal in making converts to their faith.

"One thing now fell out (1554) which caused some disturbance among the prisoners. Many of them that were under restraint for the profession of the Gospel, were such as held 'free-will,' tending to the derogation of God's grace, and refused the doctrine of absolute predestination and original sin. They were men of strict and holy lives, but very hot in their opinions and disputations, and anquiet. Divers of them were in the King's Bench, where Bradford and many other Gospellers were, many whereof, by their conferences, they gained to their own persuasions. Bradford had much discourse with them. The name of their chief man was Harry Hart, who had writ something in defence of his doctrine. Trew and Abingdon were teachers also among them, Kemp, Gybson, and Chamberlain, were others. They ran their notions as high as Pelagius did, and valued no learning; and the writings and authority of the learned they utterly rejected and despised. Bradford was apprehensive that they might do great harm in the church, and therefore out of prison wrote a letter to Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer, the three chief heads of the reformed, though oppressed, church of England, to take cognizance of this matter, and to consult with them in remedying it; and with him joined bishop Ferrar, Rowland Taylor, and John Philpot. Upon this occasion, Ridley wrote a treatise on God's Election and Predestination; Bradford also wrote upon the same subject, and sent it to those three fathers in Oxford for their approbation; and theirs being obtained, the rest of the eminent divines in and about London, were ready to sign it also<sup>1</sup>." These free-willers told Bradford, "He was a great slander to the Word of God in respect to his doctrine, in that he believed and affirmed the salvation of God's children to be so certain that they should assuredly enjoy the same. For they said it hanged partly upon our perseverance to the end." Bradford said,

<sup>1</sup> Strype's Life of Cranmer, p. 350.

“ it hanged upon God’s grace in Christ, and not upon our perseverance in any point: for then were grace no grace<sup>1</sup>.” He says in his letter to the three bishops at Oxford, “ You see ” — “ how Christ’s glory and grace is likely to lose much light, if your sheep *quondam* be not something holpen by them that love God, and are able to prove that all good is to be attributed only and wholly to God’s grace and mercy in Christ, without other respects of worthiness than Christ’s merits. The effects of salvation they so mingle and confound with the cause, that if it be not seen to, more hurt will come by them than ever came by the Papists, in as much as their life commended them to the world more than the Papists<sup>2</sup>.”

These proceedings were not without effect in the conversion of some from their errors; but favourers of the same opinions still continued. Two years after this date, the memorialist observes: “ There were now abundance of sects and dangerous doctrines, whose maintainers shrouded themselves under the professors of the Gospel. Some denied the Godhead of Christ, some denied his Manhood, others denied the Godhead of the Holy Ghost, original sin, the doctrine of free election and predestination, the descent of Christ into hell—which the Protestants here generally held. Some the baptism of infants. Some condemned the use of all indifferent things in religion; others held free-will, man’s righteousness and justification by works—doctrines which the Protestants in the time of king Edward for the most part disowned<sup>3</sup>.”

In the latter part of the year 1558, Mary ended her unhappy reign,—truly unhappy to her people, and attended with such extraordinary visitations of Providence, that the pious sufferers could not but see the avenging hand of God, “ for his servants’ blood that was shed.” “ What immoderate rains and tempests reigned in one year! What intolerable heat and droughts in another year! What penury and scarceness of corn and victuals! What hunger and famine thereof followed! And what diseases and sicknesses every where prevailed! The like whereof had never been known before, both for the lasting and mortality of them; which, being hot burning fevers and other strange diseases, began in the great dearth 1556, and increased more and more the two following years. In the summer 1557, they raged horribly throughout the realm, and killed an exceeding great number of all sorts of men; but especially of gentlemen

<sup>1</sup> Strype’s Life of Craumer, p. 350.    <sup>2</sup> Strype’s Cranmer, lxxxiii. Appendix.

<sup>3</sup> Mem. vol. v. p. 117.

and men of great wealth. So many husbandmen and labourers also died, and were sick, that in harvest time, in divers places, men would have given one acre of corn for the reaping and carrying in of another. In some places, corn stood and shed on the ground, for lack of workmen. In the latter end of the year, quartan agues were not only common, but to most persons very dangerous; especially to such as had been sick of burning fevers before." Few houses escaped. "In 1558, in the summer, about August, the same fevers raged again in such manner, as never plague or pestilence, I think, killed a greater number. If the people of the realm had been divided into four parts, certainly three parts of those four should have been found sick; and hereby so great a scarcity of harvest men, that those who remained took twelve pence for that which was wont to be done for three pence. In some shires, no gentleman almost escaped, but either himself or his wife, or both, were dangerously sick, and very many died: so that divers places were left void of ancient justices, and men of worship to govern the country. Many that kept twenty or thirty in their houses, had not three or four able to help the residue that were sick. In most poor men's houses, the master, dame, and servants were all sick, in such sort that one could not help another. The winter following also the quartan agues continued in like manner, or more vehemently than they had done last year. At this time died also many priests, that a great many parish churches in divers places of the realm were unserveu, and no curates could be got for money."

In the midst of these calamities the queen died, Nov. 17th, cut off by the same pestilence which had thinned her subjects; and a few hours after her demise, followed the death of cardinal Pole, struck by the same messenger of the Almighty.

The crown descended to Elizabeth, daughter of Henry VIII. by Anne Boleyn. The hopes of all the Protestants were fixed upon her, and they esteemed her preservation from the jealousy of her sister and the Papists, as an interference of Providence, betokening happier times in reserve. She had, indeed, outwardly complied with the popish religion, to save her life; but her education had been in the hands of Protestants, and her interests were connected with theirs. Nor were they disappointed in their hopes; the alteration she made in her privy council, soon indicated the measures to be pursued. It was noticed, that

<sup>1</sup> See Strype, vol. v. p. 257.

when the bishops met the queen at Highgate, though she received the others with civility, she turned with abhorrence from Bonner.

Consultations were soon held concerning the alteration of religion, which it was resolved to bring about through the only legal channel, the parliament. Some learned men among the reformers, as Bill, Parker, May, Cox, Whitehead, Grindal, Pilkington, and Sir Thomas Smith, were ordered to meet and review the service-book of king Edward<sup>1</sup>. To these divines were added some of the privy council<sup>2</sup>; these were to prepare all things ready to be laid before the parliament. Her intentions being known, the zeal of those who now appeared as favourers of the reformation, broke forth with some violence, in insults on the Romish priests, the pulling down of images, and introducing the liturgy of king Edward, without waiting for authority. A proclamation was issued to restrain them; but the Host was commanded no more to be elevated, and parts of the divine service were ordered immediately to be read in English.

The Romish prelates, it appears, had also taken their counsel; they vainly flattered themselves that if they all held together, they could not be dispensed with. The consequence was, that of this body only one member could be found, the bishop of Carlisle, who could be prevailed upon to place the crown on the queen's head at her coronation.

The parliament met in January, 1559. Lord Bacon declared the queen's mind in the upper house: "For religion, she desired they would consider of it without heat or partial affection, or using any reproachful term of *Papist* or *Heretic*; and that they would avoid the extremes of idolatry and superstition on the one hand, and of contempt and irreligion on the other hand; and that they would examine matters without sophistical niceties or too subtle speculations, and endeavour to settle things so as might bring the people to an uniformity and cordial agreement in them." From the alterations which had been prepared in the service-book, it is evident that these "niceties" referred to the nature of the presence in the sacrament. The divines of the reformed churches now very generally held a "real presence;" the papistical notion of transubstantiation, it was thought,

<sup>1</sup> Burnet's History of the Reformation, vol. ii. p. 378.

<sup>2</sup> She added to her council the Marquess of Northampton, the Earl of Bedford, Sir Thomas Parre, Sir Edward Rogers, Sir Andrew Cave, Sir Francis Knolles, Sir William Cecil, and afterwards Sir Nicholas Bacon, all of the reformed religion.

required not the severe anathema which had been attached to it, and if no act of idolatry was grounded thereon, might be held as a harmless error. Not the least abatement or alteration, however, was made or projected concerning the cardinal question of "justification by faith." In this parliament, the first fruits, tithes, and impropriations, were taken from the pope, and restored to the crown. The English service of king Edward was restored, and the supremacy again annexed to the crown, with the nomination of the bishops. The oath to be taken by all persons appointed to any public employ, in church or state, acknowledged the queen to be "supreme governor in all causes, as well ecclesiastical as temporal, within her dominions;" and renounced "all foreign power and jurisdiction." The title of "Head of the Church" was omitted, as objectionable on account of the meaning which had been attached to it by the malignity or scrupulosity of some. The supremacy over the church was to be exercised by a commission from the queen to certain both of the clergy and the laity, who were to judge in ecclesiastical causes; and should any be accused of heresy, it was provided, that such persons who should be commissioned by the queen to reform and order ecclesiastical matters, should judge nothing to be heresy but what had been already so judged by the authority of the canonical Scriptures, or by the first four general councils, or by any other general council, in which such doctrines were declared to be heresies *by the express and plain words of Scripture*: all other points not so decided were to be judged by the parliament, with the assent of the clergy in their convocation. So that the lawful power of the queen or her commissioners, did not extend to the pronouncing of what was orthodoxy or heresy, nor yet to the interpretation of Scripture, which *they* thought express and plain, unless a general council had so interpreted before them. This was a great abridgment of ecclesiastical power, as hitherto exercised in all Christian nations. If, enlightened by the improvements of subsequent ages, we ask why all penal statutes against opinions, not directly dangerous to the peace of society, were not abolished, we ask for a wisdom at that period existing in no government nor church.

The clergy in possession of the pulpits, were at this time all Papists. This induced the queen and her council, in imitation of what had been done at each change in the former reigns, to prohibit all preaching, without license under the great seal. The design of this was known to be in favour of the reformed teachers. The Papists could not complain, as they had adopted

the same measure at the commencement of the late reign. The convocation and the universities were as yet altogether in Popish hands. The queen's government, however, proceeding with great moderation and wisdom, resolved that there should be a public conference between the two parties which divided the nation. Nine on each side were appointed. "For the Papists, the bishops of Winchester, Litchfield, Chester, Carlisle, and Lincoln, with the doctors Cole, Harpsfield, Langdale, and Chedsey; for the Protestants, Scory, Cox, Whitehead, Grindal, Horn, Sands, Guest, Aylmer, and Jewel." The abbey church of Westminster was assigned for the place of conference before the privy council, the whole house of commons with a great concourse of people being present. The advocates for the Papists very unwillingly appeared at the conference, and had secretly resolved not to dispute — on the principle, that the doctrines of the church were already settled, and ought not to be disputed upon, except it was in a synod of divines; that it was too great encouragement to heretics to hear them thus discourse against the faith before the unlearned multitude; and that the queen, by so doing, had incurred the penalty of excommunication; and they talked of excommunicating her and the council. For their high contempt of the queen, the bishops of Winchester and Lincoln were committed to the tower, and the others bound to their appearance, except the abbot of Westminster, who declared himself willing, had he not been deserted by all the rest, to have gone on with the controversy.

The book of Common Prayer, as used in king Edward's time, was passed, with no material alterations, except that it was thought fit to leave out all positive denial of the corporeal presence, that if any one held the doctrine as a mere speculative point, he might not be driven from the church. It appears, also, that the queen had a strong inclination to retain images in the churches, not with a view to their worship, but as ornaments; and on the principle of a former age, that they were the books of the common people. But all the Protestant divines whom she most consulted, declared they could not conscientiously retain them, as they considered them contrary to the second commandment, and as certain to degenerate into idolatry. The queen, with some difficulty, was brought to yield, and all images were ordered to be removed from the churches. It was also enjoined, that the clergy should wear habits, according to their degrees in the university; but it was declared that this was not done for any holiness in them, but for order and decency. The attitude



of kneeling was prescribed in prayer, and reverence when the name of Jesus was pronounced; because it was the proper name of a Divine Person, — the only one in our language, and he is thereby acknowledged as “ Lord of all,” “ the image of the invisible Godhead.” Great care was taken to explain the oath of supremacy, that no offence might be taken. The queen declared “ She did not pretend to any authority for the ministering of the divine service in the church, and that all she challenged was, — that which had at all times belonged to the imperial crown of England, — that she had the sovereignty and rule over all manner of persons, under God, so that no foreign power had any rule over them; and if those who had formerly appeared to have scruples about it, took it in that sense, she was well pleased to accept it, and discharged them of all penalties in the act.”

All the Popish prelates, except the bishop of Llandaff, refused the oath. They were for a short time imprisoned, but, except the bishops of Winchester and Lincoln, and the execrable Bonner, were immediately restored to their liberty; and the two most respectable, Tostall and Thirleby, found a shelter afterwards at Lambeth, with the new archbishop, where they lived in ease and freedom. So extremely different — much to the credit of the reformation — was the conduct of Elizabeth and the bishops of her appointment, from the cruel behaviour of the popish Mary and her Papists to the early reformers!

Pensions, also, were reserved for all the clergy who resigned their benefices. This great moderation seemed at first to bid fair to reconcile the great body of the people, papistically inclined, to the change; till, as we shall see hereafter, a popish party and faction were formed in the kingdom, by the acts of Rome and her Jesuits, which called for severer laws. Indeed, so general was the compliance of the Romish clergy at this time, that the governors of the church had great suspicion of their sincerity, and feared they might still secretly inculcate the ancient superstition. Of 9400 beneficed men in England — besides the fourteen bishops — only six abbots, twelve deans, twelve archdeacons, fifteen heads of colleges, fifty prebendaries, and eighty rectors of parishes, left their benefices on account of religion!

In these circumstances, it became the first care of government to fill the episcopal sees with proper persons; and never was there a period when such a number of eminent, tried, and faithful men, known by their sufferings in the cause of Christ, were presented to the choice of the sovereign. By completing the bench of bishops with men of this description, a stability



was given to the cause of the reformation in England, which enabled it to maintain its ground against all the difficulties which it had to encounter, not only on the side of the papacy, but from the rising divisions among the reformers themselves.

The person thought of to fill the highest station in the church, was Dr. Parker. He had formerly been a chaplain to Anne Boleyn, and had been charged by her, a little before her death, to bestow his cares upon the religious instruction of her daughter. This duty he had discharged in a manner that had entitled him to the gratitude of Elizabeth, and so as to make her consider him as the most proper person to succeed in the place of the martyred Cranmer. During the Marian persecution, Parker was one of those who, at the great peril of their lives, stayed in England, and by various concealments, and travelling from place to place, still exercised his ministry among the poor persecuted flock of Christ. Knowing, from his correspondence with Cecil and Bacon, that he was destined for preferment, he asked for the revenue of some prebend, that he might continue his labours “among the simple strayed sheep of God’s fold in poor destitute parishes and cures;” or, “if he might disclose his desire, of all places in England” he thought he could end his days with most profit to the community, if placed in the university. When he heard of his designation to the archbishopric of Canterbury, he still persisted in his more humble suit, stating, in a letter to his friend Bacon, that he laboured under a “painful infirmity” that unfitted him, in his old age, for an undertaking of so great labour. “Sir, — before God I lie not — I am so in body hurt and decayed; fleeing in a night from such as sought for me to my peril, I fell off my horse so dangerously, that I shall never recover it. I am fain sometimes to be idle when I would be occupied: and also keep my bed, when my heart is not sick.”

He had also weighed well the difficulties of the situation to which he was chosen. On account of the disunion among the Protestants themselves, he apprehended an archbishop of Canterbury would be in a very delicate situation; he would have to procure “his fellows to join with him in unity of doctrine, which must be their whole strength; for if any heart-burning be betwixt them, if private quarrels stirred up abroad be brought home, and so should shiver them asunder, it may chance to have that success which, I fear, in the conclusion will follow.” “I see a great charge set before them,” — the bishops — over “the unruly flock of the English people;” and *they* “so much acloyed with worldly collections, temporal commissions, and

worldly provisions. At my last coming to London, I heard and saw books printed, which be spread abroad, whose authors be ministers of good estimation. The doctrine of one is to prove that a woman cannot be, by God's Word, a governor in a Christian realm ; and in another book going abroad, is matter set out to prove that it is lawful for every private subject to kill his sovereign, by sword, poison, or any other way, if he think him to be a tyrant in his conscience ; yea, and worthy to have his reward for his attempt." " They say that the realm is full of Anabaptists, Arians, Libertines, Free-will men, &c., against whom I thought ministers would have needed to fight in unity of doctrine. As for the Romish adversaries, their mouths may be stopped with their own books and confessions of late days. I never dreamed that ministers should be compelled to impugn ministers ; the adversaries have good sport betwixt themselves to prognosticate the likelihood." " I pray God all be conscience to God that is sometimes so pretended : men be men, yea, after the school of affliction, men be men ; Hypocrisie is a privy thief both in the clergy and in the laity," &c.

These forebodings of the archbishop elect were but too nearly realised in the subsequent history of the English church, and they shew his accurate knowledge of the state of the rising parties among the reformers. He was consecrated in December 1559. Among the bishops who officiated, was the venerable Coverdale, Tindal's friend, who had so narrowly escaped the flames in queen Mary's reign. Thus, from having borne a part in its very commencement, for he assisted the martyred Tindal in his translation of the Scriptures and other publications, he lived to see the reformation fully established in England. He finished his days in a private station, and died at London, at the age of eighty-one, in 1567.

After the consecration of the archbishop, Grindal was appointed to the see of London, Cox, king Edward's almoner, to that of Ely, Horn to Winchester, Sandys to Worcester, Merick to Bangor, Young to St. David's, Bullingham to Lincoln, Jewel to Salisbury, Davis to St. Asaph, Guest to Rochester, Berkley to Bath and Wells, Bentham to Litchfield and Coventry, Alley to Exeter, and Parr to Peterborough. Barlow and Scory, who had been bishops in king Edward's days, were placed in the sees of Chichester and Hereford. Some time afterwards, Young was translated to York, Pilkington was made bishop of Durham, Best of Carlisle, and Downham of Chester. Thus, the chief pastors of the Protestant episcopal church of England, were

very ably supplied by men who for the most part had given ample proof of their sincerity and devotion; and some of whom had jeopardised their lives for the Gospel of Christ. It was not found so easy to supply the multitude of inferior ministers which the service of the church required; nor, amidst the sacrilegious spoiling of the church property, was sufficient provision left in many places for their decent support. "The destruction of the ministers of the Gospel, partly by burning and execution, and partly by exile and discouragement of the study of divinity, had this inconvenience, that in the next reign, (that of Elizabeth,) there was a great want of clergy to supply the churches of the kingdom, and to perform divine service according to the reformation of religion established. For the remedy thereof, many laymen were ordained ministers; namely, such as could read well, and were pious, and of sober conversation, to serve in some of the parish churches for the present necessity<sup>1</sup>."

The accession of Elizabeth to the throne of England, was, also, under the providence of God, decisive of the prevalence of the reformed religion in Scotland. The interests of the reformation in that kingdom, owing to the different state of the government and of the people, had proceeded in a somewhat different manner. If it made not its way so much as it had done in England, by the patient sufferings of its martyrs, this was not owing to the want of courage and faithfulness in the Scotch reformers, or of persecuting hatred on the part of the Papists; it was, that they found themselves in a different situation. The principles of the reformed religion made an early impression on the bulk of the people in Scotland. Some of the nobility, from various motives, embraced or encouraged them. The Protestants soon found themselves a powerful faction in the state, and thus supported, the reformers often returned violence for violence; and though they were frequently nearly overwhelmed in the conflict, they sometimes became the assailants. The contest was indeed carried on much in the manner of the ancient feuds of the Scottish aristocracy; noble against noble, or a combination of that order against the crown. Religion was now the new object of strife; and principles of civil liberty, not unlike those which have been acted upon in the present age, were embraced by some of the Scotch reformers; but certainly not the principles of religious toleration. It was a war of extermination on both sides, so far as the open profession of religion was concerned; and the reformers sometimes proceeded with great violence in the destruction of churches and

<sup>1</sup> Strype.

monasteries. Knox, who was the great leader among the Scottish divines, was a man whose cast of character was peculiarly suited to such scenes, and to guard the interests of truth, amidst the warlike nobles and politicians, who, as the heads of the Protestant party, were denominated “the lords of the congregation.” The gentle virtues of the Christian character, and the patience of the saints, were certainly not exhibited in the public character of this reformer; but in courage, fortitude, and integrity, and in the maintenance of what he held to be the truth, he was truly great.

Amidst the conflicts of these contending parties, it was so ordered that, under Edward VI., England had afforded an asylum to the Scotch reformers when they were most pressed, and fled from persecution; and again, when the cruelties of Mary drove the preachers out of England, the state of politics was such at that time in Scotland, that they were received with favour, and the propagation of their doctrines was connived at. The ascension of Elizabeth occurred also at a critical moment, when preparations, aided by France, were ready to crush the reformation in Scotland; but the English queen was induced, both by policy and religion, to support it, which she effectually did, and put an end to the French influence and the Roman Catholic religion in that country<sup>1</sup>.

So far as the “pale” of the Protestant church extended in Ireland, which was but to a very confined extent, the accession of Elizabeth restored it to its ascendancy; but the bulk of the native population continued most abjectly enslaved to the Romish superstition. The Protestants of Ireland are said to have been preserved from the last extremes of persecution, under Mary, by the mistress of an inn, who dexterously substituted a pack of cards for the commission, which the queen’s agent was carrying into that country. Thus the persecution was delayed, and shortly afterwards the queen died.

<sup>1</sup> See M’Crie’s Life of Knox, and especially Cook’s History of the Reformation in Scotland.

## CHAPTER THE THIRD.

THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST SINCE THE ERA  
OF THE REFORMATION.

FROM the revolutions which were produced at the era of the reformation, the nominally Christian world was divided into three great divisions, — the Greek or Eastern churches — the Roman Catholic church — and the churches of the Protestants.

The particular object of our history, the real church of Christ, must be sought for chiefly among the last ; but the former two will demand some small share of our attention, since we have been admonished that the most corrupted churches may yet contain a faithful remnant among them. “ Even in Sardis,” it is recorded, when she was “ dead,” and had but “ a name that she lived,” there “ were some names that had not defiled their garments.”

## SECT. I.

## THE GREEK OR EASTERN CHURCHES.

The Eastern churches were, for the most part, groaning beneath the burdens of that slavery into which the victories of the Turks had plunged them. They still subsisted, however, and, as in the times of their greater prosperity, were distinguished as the Greek Catholics, and the Sectaries.

Of the former, the four great patriarchal sees, Constantinople, Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem, still remain, at least in name, as in ancient times. But with the exception of the first, the patriarchs retain little more than an empty title ; for the main body of those who profess the Christian name in Antioch and in Alexandria, and their subject bishoprics, are in communion with the sectaries, and appoint their own patriarchs and bishops. Jerusalem, also, is pretty equally divided among all the different professions.

The patriarch of Constantinople, as the head of the Greek religion, is still a person of some importance in the eyes of his own people and of his Mahometan masters. His jurisdiction extends, or till lately did extend, over Greece and the Greek Isles, Wallachia, Moldavia, and several of the European and

Asiatic provinces, which are subject to the Turks, and where a remnant of Christian population remains. The right of electing the patriarch resides in the twelve bishops whose sees are nearest to that of Constantinople; but his election must receive the confirmation of the Turkish sultan, before he is permitted to enter upon his functions. So corrupt, however, is the administration of government, and so debased are the Greek Christians under its cruel sceptre, that this right is often little respected, and this most elevated station of their church, is sometimes sold to the highest bidder, and a vacancy is made for a successful competitor, by deposition and murder. The authority of the patriarch over his own community is considerable. By the permission of the sultan, he exercises over it the office of a magistrate and judge, in addition to his spiritual functions; and though the Greek Christians never invested their chief bishop with that imperial and almost divine character to which the Roman Catholics exalted the pope, yet he exercises a right of excommunication, which, among a superstitious people, is regarded with apprehension and dread. The Holy Scriptures, and the decrees of the first seven general councils, are acknowledged as the rule of the Greek faith; but the patriarch and his fellow bishops are the only authorised interpreters of this code; and whatever evils may sometimes be incident to the stormy progress of private judgment, the stagnation of all religious inquiry among the Greeks, and the general ignorance and abject superstition both of the priests and of the people, strongly mark the greater evils of an opposite system.

Derived from the same sources — “the corrupt following of the apostles” of Christ, and the distorted ordinances of primitive Christianity — the Greek superstition bears a strong resemblance to that of the Roman church. The Greek Christians, indeed, detest, with Protestant feelings, the idol which has been erected at Rome; nor have they reached the full measure of the Romish apostacy, respecting works of supererogation and the sale of indulgences, or in the idolatrous worship of the Host. This “strange God” is peculiar to the church of Rome. Their notion of the eucharist seems to be similar to the transubstantiation of the Romanists; they administer however in both kinds. They do not admit images; but they pay an equal adoration to pictures and sculptured idols; and their invocation of saints, and their veneration for relics, are much the same. Marriage is permitted to their secular priests. The sacraments of the Greek church, or, as they call them, mysteries, considered as generally



necessary, are baptism, baptismal unction, the eucharist, and confession. The last consists of the acknowledgment of sin, — but not necessarily of auricular confession, — and of absolution by the priest. Baptism they administer by a trine immersion, in the names of the sacred Trinity; and they give the eucharist to children immediately after baptism. Baptismal unction seems to have usurped the place of “the imposition of hands” in confirmation, with which indeed a similar ceremony was very early associated in the primitive church. This chrism or anointing takes place immediately after baptism. The oil for the purpose is consecrated with great ceremony by the bishop, and it is styled “the seal of the gift of the Holy Ghost.” Their “doctrine of the resurrection and of eternal judgment,” is not cumbered with a belief in a purgatory; but still they admit prayers and services for the dead, and even pray for the remission of their sins.

The blessed reformation in the West, made little or no impression on the East. The Lutherans early conceived a hope that the Greek church would coalesce with them. Philip Melancthon sent a copy of the Confession of Augsburg, translated into Greek, to the patriarch of Constantinople; but no answer was returned. The divines of Tübingen, at a subsequent period, opened a correspondence with the patriarch; and in the year 1559, the latter even sent a deacon to Wittemberg, to examine the state of things there; but the negociation was fruitless, — the Greeks discovered no relish for the truths of the reformation.

Accounts generally agree, in regard to the ignorance, superstition, and low state of morals, which every where pervade the Greek church. All will admit exception; but the secret progress of true and spiritual religion among them, from age to age, and the instances in which those who still retain a form of godliness are touched by its power, no pen has traced for us; it is known only to Him who “seeth in secret.” One remarkable exception appears on the page of history, in the case of Cyril Lucar, a patriarch of Constantinople, in the seventeenth century. This prelate had improved himself by travelling, and had made himself acquainted with the institutions both of the Romish and the Protestant churches. He did not conceal his approbation of the religious sentiments of the English and Dutch churches, and avowed schemes of reformation for his own church. But he fell a martyr to the design, the Romish Jesuits having aided the perfidious Greeks to procure his destruction. He was put to death by the order of the sultan, in the year 1638. We cannot



however but hope, that where one object so prominent has caught the eye of the mariner in this partial glimpse of light; more extended shores were stretched out in its neighbourhood; which no one explored.

The Georgians and Mingrelians, the descendants of the Iberians and Colchians, are considered as belonging to the Greek Catholic church, though they do not acknowledge the jurisdiction of the patriarch of Constantinople. They have their own pontiff, whom they call "the Catholic," with subordinate bishops and priests; but the profession of Christianity among them seems to be at the lowest possible ebb..

The Russian church must also be classed among the Greek Catholics. It was originally subject to the jurisdiction of the patriarch of Constantinople, who was accustomed to send a bishop to govern it, as often as a vacancy occurred. But in the year 1589, the patriarch Jeremiah, who had taken a journey into Muscovy, to levy pecuniary succours against a rival, was compelled, on that occasion, by the Grand Duke and the Muscovite monks, to place at their head an independent patriarch.

The patriarch of Constantinople was still, however, to sanction the appointment, and receive a tribute. Job, archbishop of Rostow, was accordingly proclaimed the first patriarch of the Russian church; and towards the middle of the following century, both the tribute and the necessity of confirmation at Constantinople, were dispensed with. The Russian church, however, still retained the doctrines and institutions of the mother church, with the same degree of ignorance and superstition, and probably a large portion of barbarism. Things continued in this state till the accession of the extraordinary Russian legislator Peter I. With his measures began the general civilisation of the empire, the happy influence of which the church would of course feel. He introduced no alteration into its creed,—but he changed considerably the government of the church, and curtailed the exercise of its power. In imitation of the Protestant sovereigns and states, Peter claimed the supremacy for himself, in right of his imperial crown. The dignity of patriarch he entirely abolished, and invested the spiritual government of the church in an assembly, which was to be held at St. Petersburg, under the title of the Holy Synod, in which one of the archbishops was to act as president. Liberty of conscience was granted to all; with some discouragements however to Roman Catholics, and an absolute exclusion of the Jesuits. Such is the present state of the Russian church.

About the year 1666, a sect appeared in this empire, who called themselves Isbraniki—"the multitude of the elect;" but by their opponents they were called Roskolniki, or "the seditious faction." Whether they answered to the name assumed by themselves, or to that given them by their adversaries, does not seem to be fully explained; or whether, being originally a people pure in doctrine and practice, but persecuted with every cruelty, and driven into the woods and deserts, they became in the next generation as fierce and desperate in their character as they are represented. They partook of the benefit of the more liberal government introduced by Peter I., and are said still to remain, and to have increased their numbers.

The sectaries of the Greek church, as in more ancient times, were still comprised under two general denominations, the Eutychians, and the Nestorians.

1. The Eutychians, from their maintaining the doctrine of one nature in Christ, are also called Monophysites, and not unfrequently Jacobites, from a person of the name of Jacob, who rose to great eminence among them. These sectaries abound both in Asia and Africa. At the head of the former is Eutychian, patriarch of Antioch. These patriarchs always take the name of Ignatius. He has a colleague for the country beyond the Tigris, called the maphrian or primate of the East. The Eutychians of Africa have also their patriarch of Alexandria, to whom they are subject. They consist of the Copts or native Egyptians. To this patriarch, the neighbouring Abyssinians send for their primate, whom they call Abuna.

To the Eutychian sect belong also the Armenians, but differing in minor points of faith and discipline. They are governed by three patriarchs, the chief of whom resides in a monastery at Echmiazin. His authority and revenues are said to be great, and as the Armenians are extended, by their habits of commerce, over all the East, he has his delegates in several cities, as at Constantinople and at Jerusalem.

The church of Rome has often endeavoured to draw these sectaries into her dominion, but with little permanent success. The Armenians have suffered extremely in the devastation of their country during the war between the Turks and the Persians. There is reason to hope that the Armenian churches, in many parts, have been preserved from that entire ignorance and superstition which generally pervade the Eastern Christians. Their merchants frequent all parts of Europe, and both from England and Holland, translations of the Holy Scriptures, and theological

works, have at various times been sent by them into Asia ; labours which can hardly have been without their fruits.

2. The Nestorians are also still widely extended over the East. They had all acted in subordination to one pontiff, called " the Catholic," who resided first at Bagdad, and afterwards at Mosul. About the year 1552, they became divided by the double election of a Catholic. The weaker party, to strengthen their interest, made their submission to Rome, but they afterwards withdrew it. They still continue a distinct body in the mountainous parts of Persia, under their patriarch, who bears the name of Simeon. The patriarch of the main body of the Nestorians still remains at Mosul, and since 1559 has taken the name of Elias. His jurisdiction extends from Arabia to Hindostan ; the Christians of St. Thomas, on the coast of Malabar, who have lately become an object of such interest to the Christians of Britain, belonging to this class.

When the Portuguese first visited India, in 1503, they were surprised to find upwards of a hundred Christian churches that had never heard of the pope ! So far as they obtained the power, they attempted, with the usual cruelties of the Roman Catholics of those ages, to reduce them to conformity to the church of Rome. A hundred and fifty of the Syrian clergy were accused of the following practices and opinions : " That they had married wives ; that they owned but two sacraments, baptism and the Lord's supper ; that they neither invoked saints, nor worshipped images, nor believed in purgatory : and that they had no other orders or names of dignity in the church, than bishop, priest, and deacon." The churches near the coast were corrupted from their ancient simplicity by the Roman inquisitors. But there still remained churches in the interior beyond the reach of their power and influence.

Dr. Buchanan visited these churches, which are about fifty in number, in the year 1806 ; he saw much to remind him of the country parishes of England, both in the structure of their more ancient-built churches, and in the white vestures of their priests and ministers. They had preserved the Bible in manuscript, and were possessed of a scriptural liturgy, derived from the ancient church of Antioch ; but instruction by preaching was little in use among them.

" The doctrines of the Syrian Christians are few in number, but pure, and agree in essential points with those of the church of England ; so that, although the body of the church appears to be ignorant, and formal, and dead, there are individuals who are alive to righteousness, who are distinguished from the rest by

the purity of their lives, and are sometimes censured for too rigid a piety<sup>1</sup>."

## SECT. II.

### THE ROMISH CHURCH.

The reformation had deprived the Roman church of the half part of the dominion in Europe, and seemed to have impaired very considerably her authority over the nations still subject to her superstition. The reformers had suffered themselves to be fully persuaded that the mystic Babylon was about to fall, and they erroneously applied to themselves the symbol of the stone cut from the mountain without hands, which was to destroy the whole fabric of human power, by which the apostate was supported; and that they were to become the "great mountain which was to fill the whole earth." And when we consider the wonderful progress made by their principles in so short a period, over a system of falsehood and superstition which the custom of ages had rivetted on the human mind, but which now seemed every where to give way at the slightest touch, it must be acknowledged that the prospect exhibited much that had a tendency to flatter them. But the Protestants very soon became weakened by their divisions, and contentions among themselves. They were guilty also of an important error, in not respecting the sacred principle of order in the church, which it was far more easy, in their ardent zeal, to pull down, than to erect in its place a new ecclesiastical fabric which could command the respect of mankind. The wealth of which the church had been robbed in Protestant countries, was more than ever needful for her support; needful for the independence of her ministers, who were no longer to be exempted from the common cares of life, by being "forbidden to marry;" needful as a fund of education, for without instruction, the golden canon of protestantism, "the right of private judgment," might prove very mischievous and hurtful to some of its possessors. Luther soon perceived a multitude around him, whom he wished had continued Papists. The gift of religious liberty to the people, required that the "key of knowledge" should be well invested; for the preservation of this blessing, a generally respected church order, which the spiritually ambitious could not hope to violate, was more than ever necessary. The pressure of the former church authority, had indeed been too great to admit the becoming liberty of the Christian mind, and for honest inquiry to have sufficient play; but, altoge-

<sup>1</sup> Buchanan's Christian Researches.

ther relaxed, it threatened the dissolution of the community. True piety clothed with humility would not wander far; but the external church, which is to be governed under "the Chief Shepherd," in every country and under every form and regimen, is found to be composed of other elements than those. The Protestant community, considered generally, suffered for the want of order and well-regulated public authority. In some parts also of the Protestant world, an infringement was made upon the Divine precept, and recourse was had to the weapons of a carnal warfare. This rarely prospered long; and it ever seemed entailed with the curse, "He that killeth with the sword shall perish with the sword; and he that leadeth into captivity, shall go into captivity." By the careful reader of history, even the military successes of Protestants will be found, in their fruits, to have had a baneful effect on their religion, as to its true interest. Little has been won in arms, but much has been brought about for the welfare of religion, by that Providence which "setteth up kings and putteth down kings," and "turneth the hearts of princes whithersoever he pleaseth."

But above all, that TRUTH, which in the early days of protestantism was so "mighty through God to the pulling down of the strong holds" of idolatry and superstition, was not long retained in purity, every where in the reformed part of the world. The first generation had hardly fallen asleep, when several deviations from the original doctrines began to make their appearance; and, though the same hostility remained against the grosser corruptions of the papacy, the united arm no longer struck at the foundation, and the blows were much enfeebled.

On the other hand, the superstition of Rome, when restored from the paralysing effects of the first attack, recovered strength, and supplied by artifice and political craft what it had lost of direct authority. "The vital principle," which the historian<sup>1</sup> has attributed to the "Eternal City," was yet to put forth new animation; or, to speak in allusion to the language of Scripture, whose prophetic parts the reformers had too hastily expounded, the "mystery of iniquity" was still to operate; the "working of Satan with all power, and signs, and lying wonders," was yet to last longer. Nor was "all the deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish," yet exhausted: "because men received not the love of the truth," "God's judgment would still send a strong delusion that they might believe a lie." How often, in the

<sup>1</sup> Gibbon.

history of the apostate church, has she appeared on the point of being unmasked, by her covetousness and profligacy, in the eyes of her superstitious votaries, and they ready to spoil her, and "strip her naked, and burn her with fire!" But when, at the very eve apparently of a revolution, something extraordinary has saved her from ruin. When the corruption and luxurious negligence of her secular clergy had almost exposed her to shame, the fictitious piety of the ancient monks, exhibited in their voluntary humility, and austerity, and pretended miracles, redeemed her character with the people. And when these were sunk in sloth and ignorance, and were corrupted by the wealth which they had amassed, so that the delusion again seemed ready to burst, the two famous orders of "begging and preaching friars" arose, the Franciscans and Dominicans, and the policy of Rome adopted them; and they, with the ardour of new societies, practised the arts of superstition, and strengthened afresh her spiritual dominion. But these new orders were at length themselves corrupted from the strictness of their original discipline, and often disgraced the cause they should have supported. The veil of superstition again seemed about to be torn. At this period, the truth of the reformation blazed forth, and penetrated every corner of the Roman Catholic world. Had men then "received the love of the truth," and not still "had pleasure in unrighteousness," the magic sceptre of Rome had been broken. But this was not the case, and the powers of darkness once more came to her assistance. At this critical period there arose suddenly, and in a most remarkable manner, a new order and society, exactly suited to the times, and most admirably adapted to supply the very instrument needed to uphold the declining cause of Rome.

This new order was the society of the Jesuits. It originated in the extraordinary fanaticism of Ignatius Loyola, a Spanish knight. Having been wounded in the siege of Pampeluna, in 1521, during his convalescence he began to read the lives of the saints, and the illiterate soldier resolved to quit the military for the ecclesiastical profession. He dedicated himself to the Virgin Mary, as her knight, and went on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. After studying in the Spanish universities, he began to project this new order,—by the immediate inspiration of Heaven as he pretended,—and assisted, as it is supposed, by some more wise than himself, who saw the importance of such a fanatic. He laid down its rudiments with wonderful success. In 1540, the pope confirmed the society; Loyola presided over it for fifteen years, and under the next succeeding generals of the order,



Laynez and Aquaviva, men greatly superior to him in abilities, its institutions were brought to perfection. Thus, contemporary with the reformation, or immediately following its steps, an instrument was preparing, which was well calculated to check its progress, to counteract its influence, and, in an indirect way, to destroy its sources.

The plan of this society, which soon spread over all the Roman world, and had its secret agents in all Protestant countries, was laid with wonderful wisdom and sagacity, in order to meet the exigencies of the times, and to avail itself of every advance which had been in the recent improvements of civilisation. The Jesuits were to retain all that was useful in the ancient monkish institutions; accordingly, they bound themselves by vows of poverty, celibacy, and of the most implicit obedience to the superior of the order; and to these was added a most rigorous obligation to go without deliberation or delay wherever the pope should think fit to send them. But it was perceived that the times were past, when, by monkish austerities and the religious devotions of the recluse, they could win the veneration of mankind, and by that means insinuate themselves into the government of their opinions; the Jesuits were therefore to spend their time in a different manner. They were to study man in his now improving state, emerging from the barbarity and ignorance of the dark ages, and to calculate upon his new wants and propensities, as the means of their success. They were particularly to fit themselves for the education of youth, especially of the higher orders, according to the late improvements. The revival of classical literature had hitherto been of great assistance to the Protestants, and had been most assiduously cultivated by them; but now they were no longer to possess this superiority. The vast importance of the press, in the hands of the enemies of Rome, had also been seen in this inquiring age; the Jesuits were therefore to be trained to use this engine of war in her defence. An activity had indeed been recently given to the human mind in every rank and pursuit of life. Governments studied a more refined policy; the arts and sciences were throwing off the shackles of ages; the intercourse of nations was opened by adventurous travellers; speculations of trade and commerce were enlarged, and received new directions; and inventions to increase the convenience and enjoyments of life, were every where multiplied. To every pursuit of man in all the business of life, the Jesuit was to accommodate himself, and to cultivate the talents which would make him agreeable, useful, or necessary; or fit to



et counsellor and the guide in every department: left of the ancient superstition, which could be ~~em-~~ advantage, was not neglected; and in particular, they after the office of confessors to the Catholic princes, and the leading persons in society. And, indeed, by their dexterity and address, they contrived, in a very short time, to engross this profession to themselves; and thus, the consciences of those who ruled mankind being put within their keeping, they acquired an unbounded influence.

Whatever advantage the Jesuits acquired as instructors of youth, as arbiters of literature and of public manners, as ministers of religion or as teachers of philosophy, as the companions or advisers of mankind—all was faithfully turned and applied to one point—the interest of their order, and to its great object—the aggrandisement of the Roman pontiff. Numerous as they were, and composed of men of such a variety of character, one spirit animated the whole, and every order was received and circulated throughout the world, and executed with military exactness. No affair of importance, which happened in the next two hundred years, from the time of their institution, escaped their observation; and there were very few that were entirely free from their intermeddling or management. Commanding such resources, they knew how to fix the proper man in his right station, and could select and bring him from the remotest regions. The reformers, after being accustomed to the easy defeat of the Romish doctors, found a new body of well-disciplined troops brought into the field against them, trained for argument and disputation, often their superiors in the knowledge of the world, and “well informed to make the worse appear the better reason.” These were united; the Protestants were divided. The former had no room to dispute about indifferent and subordinate matters; they had a single eye to their great object. The Protestants did not so serve the cause of truth; they quarrelled among themselves about trifles, and fought against each other. Neither their camp nor their councils were free from the spies and secret emissaries of the enemy. In all their civil dissensions and religious disputes, it has been suspected that the Jesuits had a hand; and it more than once appeared as probable, that the reformation, instead of pursuing its victories to the destruction of Rome, would fall before her, sapped and undermined, and overcome by artful policy.

All the active powers of the Romish church were concentrated in this society, and directed through its channels. It

supplied her with scholars, and politicians, and artificers in every art. So far as they were useful, it found devotees and workers of miracles to impose upon the superstitious. If champions of her cause were wanted to hazard their lives in Protestant countries, it could furnish a host, who, while they suffered the most cruel deaths, as traitors against the state, could believe themselves, and make others believe, that they were martyrs for their religion. And because the splendour of the triple crown had been diminished by the loss of so many provinces in Europe, they extended their views far beyond its limits, and compassed sea and land to make proselytes to the pope. They negotiated with great address, and often with some success, with the Greek church and all its different sectaries. A zeal for missions among the heathen was suddenly excited among them, and which, for many years, left every thing of the kind in the Protestant world far behind! Their able missionaries penetrated the confines of China and Japan on the East, and sought out the Indians in the newly discovered world in the West, and thus had a fair promise to be the founders of new empires! So that the sovereign pontiff might be complimented with more of truth than the Spanish monarch, that the sun never set on his dominions.

But the most essential service which the Jesuits rendered to the papacy, was their management of the public mind in Europe. The spirit of inquiry which had been excited even in Roman Catholic countries, had nearly proved fatal to the most valuable interests of Rome; but they contrived either to calm it, or to divert it to other objects. Some of the more flagitious excesses and gross vices of the religious orders were removed, or covered with the robe of decency; and persons of far greater respectability of character were sometimes placed in the higher stations of the church. The yoke of superstition and discipline was made much lighter, and easier to be borne. The casuistry of the Jesuits, as well as their pliant rule of morals, was most characteristic of this order, and under their able management, a great license both in belief and manners was rendered easily compatible with the rigid forms of the Romish church; and the consciences of men were, by a thousand artifices, reconciled to themselves, or kept from giving up their pretensions to religion, though the most evil propensities were indulged.

The doctrines of the Roman church were supposed to have been settled for ever by the council of Trent. It was during the long sittings of this council, that the Jesuits arose; and their policy, or the policy which created them, is very visible in its

conclusions. The greatest ambiguity was designedly adopted in its decrees, that every party in the Romish church might be comprehended, or, at least, not offended; and except the sole doctrine of "justification by faith alone," it were difficult to point out what doctrine was positively and without easy evasion excluded from the Roman faith. The doctrines of grace and predestination were generally indeed denied by those champions of popery who most opposed the reformers; but every shade of opinion in stating these doctrines, and reconciling them with the moral agency of man, appeared among their theologians at the council of Trent; and a great body among them was still staunch for the orthodoxy of Augustin, and the other fathers who had opposed the Pelagian heresies. It is remarkable too, that the dispute respecting the apostolical institution of the episcopal office, was as fiercely contended, as it was afterwards among the Protestants. As the latter argued against it, in order to maintain the divine right of Presbyterianism, or of the congregational form of church government; so, the thorough Papists opposed it, in order to set above all competition the successor of 'the prince of the apostles.' Many jarring and conflicting opinions on various other topics were also broached; but the artifice of the Roman court, and the rising spirit of Jesuitism, contrived to flatter and to soothe all, that all might appear satisfied, so that the vaunted uniformity of the Roman Catholic faith might be urged with effect against the divisions of the Protestants. The Jesuits, however, were always true to their point — the full assertion of the pope's authority, and the purging of the Romish church from every leaven of the Augustinian doctrines, as assimilating too much to the reforming principles, and as totally opposed to that system of metaphysics and ethics which their wisdom was introducing. Thus, the church of Rome became more Pelagian than ever, under their management and administration.

Among the Dominicans and Augustines, and afterwards among the Jansenists of France, the ancient doctrines of the Christian church, before it was spoiled by the philosophy of the school of Alexandria, were still maintained, — that the eternal decrees of God, relating to the salvation of men, are not conditional in the obvious sense of the word, or pending on something to be supplied on the part of man; but as to those that are saved, are efficacious in the production of that condition to which salvation is applied, and in this sense only are conditional; — that in the view of the Divine acceptance as to eternal salvation, "there are no remains of purity and goodness in fallen

nature ; — that the influences of Divine grace are always effective of the decreed purpose of God ; and, to the destined end, cannot but overcome the opposition and resistance in the guilty nature of man, and therefore, in this view, God wills not the salvation of all men.

In these doctrines, they coincided exactly with the early reformers, or rather, the early reformers coincided with them. The difference between them was, that the Augustinians laboured under the notion that Divine grace was efficacious in producing an inherent righteousness in them, which it rewarded with salvation ; the reformers, on the other hand, taught the wholesome and comfortable doctrine of “ justification by faith alone, in the merits of Christ ” — that on this the confidence of the soul was to rest entire, and regard inherent righteousness as the fruits of salvation already given and applied.

In opposition to the Augustinians, the Jesuits embodied into a system the more common doctrines of the Roman Catholic church, and indeed of the Greek church also, since the prevalence of the Alexandrian philosophy. They taught “ that the *natural dominion* of sin in the human mind, and the hidden corruption it has produced in our internal frame, are *less universal* and *dreadful* than the Augustinians represented — that *human nature* is far from being deprived of all *power* of doing good — that the *succours of grace* are administered to *all mankind* in a measure *sufficient* to lead them to eternal life and salvation — that the *operations* of grace offer no violence to the faculties and powers of nature, and therefore may be *resisted* — and that God from all eternity has appointed everlasting rewards and punishments, as the portion of man in a future world, not by an absolute, arbitrary, and unconditional decree, but in consequence of that divine and unlimited *prescience*, by which he foresaw the *actions, merits, and character* of every individual<sup>1</sup>. ”

<sup>1</sup> Mosheim, cent. xvi. sect. iii. part 1. As the famous Jesuit Molina stated these doctrines — “ The decree of predestination to eternal glory was founded upon a previous knowledge and consideration of the merits of the elect : that the grace from whose operation these merits are derived, is not efficacious by its own intrinsic power only, but also by the consent of our own will ; and because it is administered in those circumstances in which the Deity, by that branch of his knowledge which is called *scientia media*, foresees that it will be efficacious. This kind of prescience, denominated in the school *scientia media*, is that foreknowledge of future contingents, that arises from an acquaintance with the nature and faculties of rational beings ; the circumstances in which they shall be placed ; the objects that shall be presented to them ; and the influence that these circumstances and objects must have on their actions. ”

It was to be expected that the Jesuits, having embraced a low system respecting Grace and its operations, would entertain sentiments equally low respecting the demands of the Holy Law. This was indeed the case, and they carried their principle of accommodation so far, that they became the teachers of a system of ethics that every decent moralist must reprobate, and of which, on some occasions, the church of Rome itself appeared ashamed<sup>1</sup>.

If something must be allowed to the exaggeration of enemies, still it will be granted that the moral precepts inculcated by the Jesuits were very lax and unscriptural.

“The Jesuits,” Dr. Mosheim remarks, “under the connivance, nay, sometimes by the immediate assistance of the Roman pontiffs, have perverted and corrupted such of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, as were left entire by the council of Trent.” “They endeavoured to diminish the authority and importance of the Holy Scriptures; they have extolled the power of human nature, changed the sentiments of many with respect to the necessity and efficacy of Divine grace; represented the mediation and sufferings of Christ as less powerful and meritorious than they are said to be in the sacred writings; turned the Roman pontiff into a terrestrial deity, and put him almost upon an equal footing with the Divine Saviour; and, finally, rendered, as far as in them lay, the truth of the Christian religion dubious, by their fallacious reasoning, and their subtle but pernicious sophistry.”

The effects of the system moulded by the Jesuits, under

<sup>1</sup> They inculcated the following maxims: “That persons void of the love of God, may expect eternal life in heaven, if they avoid all enormous crimes, *through the dread of future punishment*. That persons may transgress *with safety*, who have a *probable reason* for transgressing; i. e. any plausible argument or authority” — “as of some eminent doctor” — for the sin which they are inclined to commit. That actions *intrinsically evil*, and directly contrary to the Divine laws, may be *innocently* performed, by those who have so much power over their minds, as to join, even ideally, a *good end* to this *wicked action*, or — to speak in the style of the Jesuits — who are capable of *directing their attention aright*. That *philosophical sin* is of a very light and trivial nature, and does not deserve the pains of hell. Philosophical sin is any “action contrary to right reason, which is done by a person ignorant of the revealed law of God, or who does not think of him during the time this action is committed.” “That the transgressions committed by a person blinded by the seduction of lust, agitated by the impulse of tumultuous passions, and destitute of all sense and impression of religion, — are not imputable to the transgressor before the tribunal of God, and may often be as involuntary as the actions of a madman. That the person who takes an oath, &c. may, to elude the obligation, add to the form of words, certain mental additions and tacit reservations.”

various degrees of modification, were very great, not only in Roman Catholic countries, but in every part of Europe. The doctrines of revelation, even where they were acknowledged, seemed to lose their importance; and the sacred oracles were less studied, less talked of, and more seldom referred to by popular writers. However cherished in secret, religion was evidently become less and less a concern of society. We lose, at a certain period, the very phraseology of Scripture, which was formerly so affectionately, though sometimes very injudiciously, intermixed in the common conversation, and in the current style of authors. The pedantry of classical allusion follows; at first coarse, and partaking of the rudeness of the age; but afterwards more refined and elegant. But Scripture and Christian theology is evidently gone out of fashion; and the heathen moralists are more magnified than the apostles of Christ. Thus did the scheme of the Jesuits prepare the way for that infidel philosophy which, in our day, has threatened the dissolution of all Christian churches.

The Jesuits were, however, long the best supports of the papacy; and when, by the efforts of the enemies which their wealth, ambition, and dangerous projects had raised against them, they were suppressed in the Roman Catholic countries,—most unwillingly indeed on the part of the popes,—the Roman church seemed to have no power left, but was delivered, bound, into the hands of her spoilers. The description of the Jesuits, in a sermon preached by Dr. Brown, archbishop of Dublin, as early as the year 1651, has often been quoted as almost prophetic. “There are a new fraternity of late sprung up who call themselves Jesuits, which will deceive many, who are much after the scribes’ and pharisees’ manner among the Jews. They shall strive to abolish the truth, and shall come very near to do it. For these sorts will turn themselves into several forms; with the heathens a heathenist, with the atheists an atheist, with the Jews a Jew, with the reformers a reformer, purposely to know your intentions, your minds, your hearts, and your inclinations; and thereby bring you at last to be like the fool that said in his heart, ‘*There is no God.*’ These shall spread over the whole world, shall be admitted into the councils of princes, and they never the wiser; charming of them, yea, making your princes reveal their hearts and the secrets therein, and yet they not perceive it; which will happen from falling from the law of God, by neglect of fulfilling the law of God, and by winking at their sins: yet in the end, God, to justify his law, shall suddenly cut off this society, even



by the hands of them who have most succoured them, and made use of them; so that, at the end, they shall become odious to all nations. They shall be worse than Jews, having no resting place on earth, and then shall a Jew have more favour than a Jesuit."

For two hundred years, the Jesuits upheld, and, in fact, administered the papacy, and influenced, in an extraordinary manner, the politics and affairs of Europe. About the middle of the last century, their yoke began to be intolerable to the Catholic princes. Portugal banished them in 1759, France in 1764, Spain and Italy in 1767, and landed them by ship-loads on the papal territories; and in 1773, Pope Clement XIV. was compelled totally to abolish them.

The history of the Jesuits and of their artful machinations, is the most striking and commanding fact in the annals of the popedom, since the period of the reformation. By subtlety and artful policy they well sustained the falling empire. Since that event, the bishops of Rome, though they have lowered none of their pretensions, have evidently sunk in real importance. This appeared in the dispute between Paul V. and the Venetians, at the commencement of the seventeenth century. The pope still calls himself "vice-god" — "the monarch of Christendom" — "the supporter of papal omnipotence." Having laid the republic under an interdict, the Venetians on their part declared the sentence null, and banished the Jesuits and Capuchins. Both sides made preparations for war; but an accommodation, not very honourable to the pope, was brought about by the mediation of Henry IV. of France. Rome, it was abundantly evident, must reign by artifice, and not by arms. Her persecuting spirit was manifested, however, to be still in full vigour. Plans were secretly formed for the extirpation of the Protestants, and the bigoted house of Austria was found willing to carry these plans into execution. For this the Jesuits prepared the way, by publicly maintaining that the peace of Passau, between the Protestants and Charles V., had been from the first unjust; and had at any rate been rendered null and void by the Protestants themselves, who had introduced several changes in the confession of Augsberg.

The flames of religious persecution were first kindled in Austria, where the friends of the reformation were most cruelly treated by the Papists. The Bohemian Protestants were involved in the same persecution, and driven into rebellion. A civil war, conducted with great cruelty on both sides, was the



consequence. On the death of the emperor, the Bohemians chose the elector Palatine, a prince of the reformed religion, to be their king, in 1619. In the furious contest which ensued, a Lutheran prince, the elector of Saxony, was seen to take part with the Papists against the reformed. The elector Palatine lost both his elective crown and his hereditary dominions, and Bohemia was compelled, by fire and sword, to yield to the Roman yoke.

This success of the imperial arms flushed the court of Rome with all the ambition of former times; she thought of nothing less than reducing the whole tribe of heretics to their ancient dominions. By Jesuitical craft, Germany was again made the scene of a long and desolating contest, known in history by the appellation of "the thirty years' war."

But though the policy of Rome could kindle the destructive element, and feed the flame, it could not direct its issue. France was politically jealous of Austria. Protestant Sweden supplied a hero, who, with the warriors he had trained by his superior skill, came to the relief of their suffering brethren in Germany. This was the justly celebrated Gustavus Adolphus. His repeated victories soon changed the face of affairs; and though he fell in the battle of Lutzen, in the year 1632, the generals whom he had formed, maintained the contest till the peace of Westphalia was won, in the year 1648, which gave a new and lasting stability to the Lutheran and reformed churches in Germany. From this period, the persecuting spirit of Rome was constrained to confine itself to narrower limits; but its virulence was by no means spent. In Hungary, for the space of ten years, from 1671 to 1681, both Lutherans and Calvinists were involved in an uninterrupted series of the most cruel calamities and vexations. The Jesuits are marked as still being the chief instigators. Poland, during the whole course of the seventeenth century, was the scene of papal persecutions; as were also the valleys of Piedmont, where the remains of the Waldenses still continued. In Germany, the same spirit of bigotry and persecution produced almost everywhere flagrant acts of injustice, and frequent infractions of the peace of Westphalia. A prodigious multitude of the descendants of the ancient Moors in Spain, because of their suspected faith, were driven from the country by the arts of Rome. In France, the Huguenots, after scenes of the most iniquitous and barbarous persecution, which seems to deny that there was any real improvement produced in the human race by the nominal profession of Christianity, were nearly extinguished by dispersion

into other countries, or constrained conformity at home. No pains were spared, by the Jesuitical missionaries of Rome, to bring back Great Britain and Ireland to the Romish yoke. To accomplish this, no means were thought unlawful, nor were any measures too violent. The Spanish armada, in the sixteenth century, the gunpowder plot and the Irish massacre, in the seventeenth, are memorials of this. But through the mercy of God, their machinations in this country were finally defeated, and Great Britain still remained the bulwark of the reformation.

With the fall of the Jesuits, in the eighteenth century, as has been estimated, all the power of Rome seemed to fall. When this spell was broken, the Catholic princes, however they might fluctuate in their own minds between irreligion and the ancient superstition, seemed to have lost all veneration for the see of Rome. Its remaining revenues, and ecclesiastical property in general, began to be regarded as a spoil that they might seize with impunity. In 1775, the grand duke of Tuscany not only laid a tax on the property of the church, in his dominions, but entirely suppressed all the usual remittances to Rome. By his own authority he abolished the Inquisition and forty monasteries, and ordered that all ecclesiastical causes should be determined by his own bishops, without any regard to a foreign jurisdiction. The king of Naples in a great measure followed his example in 1777; and in 1782, the Inquisition was entirely abolished in Sicily. The Greeks in that kingdom were tolerated, and permitted to have a bishop nominated by the king. In 1785, some kind of accommodation took place with the pope; but the king of Naples was no longer to be called "the vassal of the holy see."

The senate of Venice pursued the same plan of suppressing several rich monasteries, and endowing hospitals with their revenues. They also invited to their city an archbishop of the Greek church, to preside over the numerous members of that community which were resident there. The duke of Modena suppressed the Inquisition, and withdrew himself in a measure from the spiritual jurisdiction of Rome. The emperor of Germany, both in his Italian and his German dominions, adopted the same policy of stripping the church of her possessions, and of suppressing religious institutions, without the slightest regard to the earnest remonstrances of the pope. Joseph II., by an edict in 1781, gave liberty of conscience to all his subjects, and prohibited any disturbance of their worship. He, in fact, abolished the papal jurisdiction, and proclaimed himself "the

supreme judge of the church and administrator of its temporal affairs." In Portugal, and even in Spain, the papal authority had been much infringed upon, and the crown was enriched at the expense of the church. The terrible Inquisition had become so much under the control of the civil power, as to be rendered very feeble in its effects, in comparison of its exertions in former times.

But these reformations of the Catholic princes, had not for their object the restoration of Christian purity in doctrine or in worship; their objects were wealth and power, and they counted upon the irreligion of the age, that much expense might be saved in the apparatus of superstition, without hazarding the stability of the state. To this they were prompted by the infidel philosophy which, though somewhat disguised, was fast arising, and influenced the councils of many, and even the breasts of some of these princes! Their policy, for the most part, could not see that there were pious as well as superstitious usages, to which the wealth dedicated by their ancestors to the support of religion, might have been applied for the benefit of mankind. But, by weakening the influence of religion, false and mistaken as it was, they disposed the minds of their subjects to receive more readily the contagion of infidelity and licentious liberty, which was soon to spread among them, and to overthrow or to endanger all their thrones. France, however, where the plague first broke out, presented, till towards the end of the century, almost the fairest prospect that the pope had to contemplate. The church of France was in full possession of all her rich endowments; but the public mind in this country was more infected by the new philosophy than in any other, and many causes conspired to bring the latent disease to a crisis. On the scenes of the French revolution, and on the new era, both civil and religious, which seems at that epocha to have commenced in the history of the European nations, the limits of this work forbid us to enter.

As the last glimpse of vigour and prosperity in the Romish superstition is seen in the exertions of the Jesuits, so, in the objects of their animosity, within the pale of the Roman Catholic church, we shall find the best clew to whatever remnant of genuine piety has dared publicly to shew itself in this apostate communion. It is not indeed decisive of a genuine piety, that some bodies of monks and ecclesiastics made a common cause against the Jesuits, in support of those truths of revelation which Augustin, and other authorities still respected in the Romish church, had inculcated, and which the Jesuits attacked; but it may lead

to a charitable hope that some of them were indeed influenced by those impulses of heavenly grace for which they so boldly contended, and for their confession of which they were sometimes content to suffer.

The Dominicans, as the followers of Thomas Aquinas, long struggled against the Jesuits, as the revivers of the Pelagian heresy. The dispute was rather suppressed than decided by the policy of Rome, and the contest was again provoked by the publication of a work entitled, "Augustinus," in which the doctrines taught by Augustin were fully developed. The author of this work was Cornelius Jansenius, bishop of Ypres: it was not however published till after his death. "It gave such a wound," Dr. Mosheim remarks, "to the Romish Church, that neither the power nor the wisdom of its pontiffs will ever be able to heal." The Jesuits considered the publication as a refutation of their opinions. They attacked it in their writings, and used all their influence to procure its condemnation at Rome. The Roman inquisitors, accordingly, in the year 1641, prohibited the perusal of the book; and in the following year, Pope Urban VIII. condemned it by a solemn bull, as "infected with several errors that had been long banished from the church." Thus, so far as the infallibility of the pope extended, Augustin, and perhaps Thomas Aquinas himself, were condemned as erroneous leaders.

But Augustin still had disciples in the Romish communion, particularly in the Belgic provinces, and in the university of Louvain, who would by no means acquiesce in this sentence. It met with still greater opposition in France, where the abbot of St. Cyran, a zealous follower of Augustin, and a friend of Jansenius, strenuously defended his book; and although the great body of the French clergy sided with the Jesuits, the party of Jansenius had, notwithstanding, some respectable patrons. Besides several bishops who were eminent for their piety, it included many elegant scholars, as Arnauld, Nicole, Pascal, Quesnel, and some others, known by the denomination of "The Authors of Port-Royal." And surely, if there were not among these satisfactory evidences of true piety, and of the real experience of those influences of divine grace for the doctrine of which they contended, we shall search for them in vain on Roman ground! Yet how was their piety clouded with the most abject superstition, and disfigured by the most slavish austerities! A pretension to miracles wrought in support of their opinions, and a very bitter zeal against the Protestants, cannot at the same time but abate our admiration of their character. The cross, however,

was their portion. Though they seem to have been popular among the lower orders, on the part of their antagonists were arraigned all the powers of the church and state, and their arguments and miracles were confronted by bulls, as if the honour and safety of the papacy depended on their suppression.

The pope condemned the following propositions of Janse-  
nius: That there are Divine precepts which good men are absolutely unable to obey, nor has God given them that measure of grace which is essentially necessary to render them capable of such obedience — that no person, in this corrupt state of nature; can resist the influence of Divine grace, when it operates upon the mind — that, in order to render human actions meritorious, it is not requisite that they be exempt from necessity, but only that they be free from constraint — that the Semi-Pelagians err grievously in maintaining, that the human will is endowed with a power of either receiving or resisting the aids and influences of preventing grace — that whosoever affirms that Jesus Christ made expiation by his sufferings and death, for the sins of all mankind, is a Semi-Pelagian. Of these propositions, the pope declared the first four were heretical; the fifth he pronounced rash, impious, and injurious to the Supreme Being.

A respite, however, was afforded to the suffering Jansenists, in the year 1669, by a strong opposition among the French clergy, against the new subscriptions required by the pope. As they conceived that the liberties of their church were violated, they refused to subscribe, and were joined by Anne G  n  vi  ve de Bourbon, dutchess of Longueville, and sister of Louis XIV. During her life, the Jansenists found a temporary indulgence; but after her death, the influence of a Jesuit confessor prevailed, and they became the objects of a cruel persecution, which many sustained with great fortitude, and some avoided by a voluntary exile. Arnauld, who may be considered as the head of the Jansenists, fled into Holland, and is said to have won over to his persuasion most of the Roman Catholics who resided under the Dutch government; and here they found a shelter from the pope and his Jesuits. But in France, their entire depression was aimed at; their favourite retreat, the Convent of Port-Royal, in the fields in the neighbourhood of Paris, was erased in 1709; and the very bodies of the Jansenists, as well as the living members of the Convent, were removed to other places.

Not only the theological doctrines of the Jansenists were offensive to the Jesuits, but equally so was the strictness that reigns in their moral system and practical religion. They were,

besides, reprovers of the laxity of manners, and of the depravity, that pervaded the sacred order of the Roman church. They encouraged the reading of the Holy Scriptures, and zealously inculcated that piety does not consist in rites and ceremonies alone, but in inward holiness and divine love.

These faithful disciples of Augustin, however, with all their sincerity and undissembled piety, illustrate but too well the importance of a defect in their system — its not including a clear and definite knowledge of justification by faith alone in the merits of Christ — the distinguishing doctrine of protestantism, and the want of which knowledge left them still in subjection to the elements of the papacy. Like the Galatians, to a certain extent, “having begun in the spirit, they would be made perfect in the flesh.” They fully maintained the gratuitous and eternal election of God in Christ; but their being perfected for ever by the one sacrifice of Christ, and their privilege to glory in his imputed merits through faith before the effects of their eternal union with him could be fully and personally realised, they did not clearly understand, but sought “to make their calling and election sure,” by grace as an infused quality, and by inherent righteousness. Hence, “the penitential system of the Jansenists, which seemed to prescribe voluntary sufferings and painful labours, and all the austerities of the ancient monks, almost as a satisfaction for sin. They extolled those who had even shortened their days by excessive abstinence and labour, as “the sacred victims of repentance” — “who had been consumed by the fire of divine love.” To such an excess did they carry their notion of the meritoriousness of such persons in the sight of God, that they magnified them into patron saints, procuring blessings upon their friends and the church.

The persecuting hatred of the Jesuits, guides us to the discovery of some good among those who were called Mystics, or Quietists, in the Romish communion. Their favourite maxim — “that religion consists in the perfect calm and tranquillity of the mind removed from all external and finite things and centred in God, and in such a pure love of him as is independent of all prospect of interest or reward” — might indeed, in connexion with other principles, be but a more refined system of self-righteousness and fantastic delusion. Yet the same language, properly understood and qualified, and grounded upon the truths of revelation, may not unaptly describe the highest aim of the reconciled child of God. We may hope there were some such among these Mystics, though a mysticism of another cast too



frequently appears. Molinos, a Spanish priest, was persecuted to death for these sentiments, by the Jesuits, in 1696. They were about the same time propagated in France by the writings of Madam Guyon, though combated with great severity by the celebrated Bossuet. Fenelon, the amiable archbishop of Cambray, defended the doctrine of "disinterested love;" but he was compelled by the pope to retract. His opinions were condemned by Innocent XII., and the archbishop was compelled to read the sentence before the people, from his own pulpit at Cambray.

During the eighteenth century, popery remained unchanged. The pope, indeed, retained but a shadow of his former greatness, but his pretensions were the same, and the doctrines of the Roman Catholic faith were supposed to have undergone no alterations. The disciples of Augustin, the Jansenists, still continued, and included the greater part of the Roman Catholics in Flanders and the Belgic provinces, who, though they professed great attachment to the communion of the church of Rome, paid but little regard to the authority of the pope, when it condemned their own opinions. In France, the Jesuits were much alarmed by the success of a translation of the New Testament into the French language by Quesnel, which had been published with notes, agreeably to the religious sentiments of the Jansenists. They procured, by the influence of Louis XIV., to have it condemned; and Clement XI. issued the famous bull known by the title "Unigenitus," in which Quesnel's New Testament was censured, and a hundred and one propositions contained in its notes were pronounced heretical. This bull manifested, beyond all controversy, that popery remained unchanged. But it was not only disliked by the Jansenists, as condemning their peculiar doctrines, but by a large body of the French clergy and laity, at the head of whom was the cardinal de Noailles, archbishop of Paris, as being, in some of its provisions, an infringement on the liberties of the Gallican church. They therefore appealed from the bull to the next general council; but the power of the monarch being cast into the scale, the Jesuits and the court of Rome prevailed: a secret schism, however, was produced in the church of France, which was never entirely healed, till all inferior concerns were lost in the late wonderful Revolution.



## SECT. III.

## THE CHURCHES OF THE LUTHERAN PROFESSION.

Of the fruits of that reformation which Luther began, a small portion only bears his name among posterity, the term Lutheran having become confined to those churches which retain his doctrine of the presence in the sacrament. Unhappily, after the death of the first reformers, the Lutherans became more and more tenacious of this peculiarity; and some of them considered those Protestants who refused to receive it, as heretics, and almost worse than Papists. The authority of Luther had at first established his notion of consubstantiation over all the north of Protestant Europe. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, however, not only did Crypto-Calvinism, as it was called — a leaning to Calvin's doctrine concerning the sacrament — create great division among the Lutherans, but whole countries fell off from their confession. In 1604, the landgrave of Hesse went over to the reformed church, and in 1614, the elector of Brandenburg followed his example.

The supremacy of the temporal sovereign is admitted throughout the Lutheran churches. The form of their ecclesiastical government is rather episcopal than presbyterian. Episcopacy however prevails in almost every gradation, till it is nearly lost in the parity of ministers; and the notions since termed Erastian, which confine the ministerial function to persuasion and remonstrance, and claim communion with the external church as a natural right, soon prevailed so far that all restoration of the ancient discipline was found impracticable.

In respect of doctrine, Luther, during his life, was the oracle of his followers. To the doctrines of grace, as maintained by Augustin against the Pelagians and Semi-Pelagians, he added, as we have already seen, a clearer statement of "justification by faith alone." Melancthon fully agreed with Luther, as his "Common Places" and other writings attest; but from the extreme diffidence and yielding nature of his character, he seemed to owe much of his firmness and stability in the truth, to the firmer mind of Luther, on whose support he leaned. After his death, he became like the fruitful vine deprived of its prop, which seemed to hang down upon the ground, and to be trampled upon by the injurious foot. Melancthon's conduct during the INTERIM, was not sufficiently firm. His heart was sound, but the

elector Maurice cajoled him into what seemed a compliance. When Henry VIII. was Protestant on no other point than the rejection of the pope's supremacy, he was apprehensive that Melancthon would yield it up. In regard to the great doctrine of faith, this reformer was blamed in his latter days, for not boldly and explicitly coming forth with his statements against its opponents. Calvin, in his correspondence, blames him respecting the doctrine of eternal election; not as thinking differently from him and his colleagues, but as "dissembling his sentiments." To *Melancthonise* seems to have become a phrase among the reformers; and the authority of Melancthon's name has been claimed in the support of very contrary systems of doctrine. In the Synergistic controversy, which respected the co-operation of the human will with the work of grace in conversion, and which marks the first entrance of Semi-Pelagianism into the Lutheran church, Melancthon suffered the following phraseology to be used, — "that there was a corresponding action of the will." This language, though perfectly ambiguous in itself, could not but seem to yield the point in dispute; and it cannot be thought surprising, that the animosity of some men of warm zeal should be provoked against him, perhaps to censure him with injustice.

After his decease, it is certain that the Semi-Pelagian notions began more and more to prevail among the Lutherans. At nearly the close of the sixteenth century, however, Luther's opinions on these points seem to have been still orthodox in his university of Wittemberg, for Huber, a professor of divinity there, was deposed from his office and banished, for attacking what now began to be called "the Calvinistic doctrine of absolute predestination and unconditional decrees." But at the period of the Synod of Dort<sup>1</sup>, it was understood that Wittemberg declared against the Calvinists, and claimed the authority of Melancthon on their side<sup>2</sup>.

Though many of the Lutheran clergy, in the seventeenth century, must be allowed to have been exceptions, yet a general deterioration of the Lutheran churches in Germany seems to be acknowledged. Dr. Mosheim accounts for this, by the demoralising effects of "the thirty years' war," both on the magistrates and on the people; by the general neglect of education; and, in the circumstances of the country, from the withdrawing of so many youths of liberal education from the service of the church to the more honourable profession of arms. He notes,

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 1619.<sup>2</sup> Brandt.

as more permanent causes, the little encouragement now given to the study of divinity. The great subserviency to the civil power to which the church was now reduced, and the poor provision made for the supply of the pastoral office, had rendered her service no longer attractive to persons of birth, or of promising abilities; so that, as a profession, the ministry sank greatly in the estimation of mankind.

By the monastic institutions in the primitive and Roman Catholic churches, poverty had been rendered not dishonourable in a Christian teacher; but it could not be so among the members of the Protestant ministry, who were expected to enter into all the various relations of life, and to become burdened with all its wants and cares. The spirit of the first reformers, which could have combated with these disadvantages of station, did not rest long upon the great body of their successors; and though their names and writings for some time commanded veneration, yet, by degrees, the authority of the first reformers and of the standard writings of their church, began to be lessened. Men were first content to be formally orthodox, without life or power; then, generations arose that would think for themselves; and the principles of religious liberty being resolutely vindicated, while some few searched the Scripture with pious care, and improved in religious knowledge, the greater part used this privilege to choose for themselves new religious systems which differed widely from the principles of the early reformers and from the records of revelation. As we approach nearer to our own times, the infidel philosophy made many converts, and threatened here, as elsewhere, the very extinction of the Christian faith, as a prejudice of former times.

Still, the ancient confessions of the Lutheran church were upheld by public sanction. Their authority with the clergy could hardly be denied, and they doubtless formed a rallying point and a firm hold of support to those who loved the doctrines of the reformers, when contending against their modern evaders and gainsayers.

The term *Pietist* also appears to designate a new spirit of religious reformation, which had arisen “to stem the torrent of vice and corruption, and to correct the licentious manners both of the clergy and people<sup>1</sup>.” The name, like others of the same kind, seems to have been given to persons and classes of men of very different descriptions. Some are described as being totally hostile to the doctrines of the reformers; as avowed ene-

<sup>1</sup> Mosheim.

mies to the whole fabric of the established church ; but in regard to others, it is undeniable that their only object was, the restoration of religion to its power, and bringing back the church to its original purity.

The pious and learned Spener is reported to have been the founder of the societies to which the name Pietists afterwards attached. The object of these societies, which were formed at Frankfort, was religious improvement, and a desire to rekindle the dying zeal of the professors of the Gospel. Some of the disciples of Spener, at Leipsic, followed the example, about 1689 ; among whom were the professors Frankius, Schadius, and Antonius. - They disapproved of the usual mode of education, and set up in their colleges lectures for the explanation of the Holy Scriptures. These lectures, which, strange as it may seem, were considered in a Protestant university as a novelty, were much frequented, and their happy effects were attested by many. But more took umbrage at the awakened spirit of real religion, and great contentions and tumults arose. It was amidst these commotions that the term Pietists was given in derision to the frequenters of these ' Biblical Colleges.' Afterwards, like many other terms of a similar origin, it came to be applied, without any discrimination or consideration, to all persons who attempted to emerge or to rouse others from the deadlike state of the public profession of religion. In this extensive sense, — though it may not improbably include some classes who were very erroneous in their views and practices, — it was sure to attach to all that remnant of true believers, who acted upon the principles and with the spirit of the first reformers. " The contagion," it is said, " was diffused with incredible celerity through all the Lutheran churches."

It is acknowledged that the real Pietists, the disciples of Spener and Franks, had no design to " introduce any change into the doctrine, discipline, or form of government, that was established in the Lutheran church." But if we are to credit our reporter, as the fanatic sects sprang up at this time of the reformation, and discredited its cause, so, while pietism roused the slumbering zeal of many, " there started up on a sudden, in all cities, towns, and villages, where Lutheranism was professed, persons of various ranks and professions, of both sexes, learned and illiterate, who declared that they were called by a ' divine impulse,' to pull up iniquity by the roots, to restore religion to its primitive lustre, and propagate it through the world, and to govern the church by wiser rules than those by

which it was at present directed<sup>1</sup>." The most extravagant things are related of these sectaries; how far in truth, and how far in prejudice, it is difficult to determine. As the Romanists attributed all the evils which arose in the days of Luther, to his principles and exertions, so the Pietists had to bear the odium of all that their enemies chose to brand with that name. But, upon the whole, we may collect that there was, at this time, a considerable revival of real religion in the Lutheran churches; and though sometimes proscribed and persecuted, it was not extinct at the end of the period of which we treat.

## SECT. IV.

### THE HELVETIC OR CALVINISTIC CHURCHES.

The disagreement respecting the eucharist, as we have remarked in a former part of this history, had divided the Protestants into two great bodies, the Lutherans and the Helvetians. This latter denomination includes all those reformed churches that did not receive Luther's doctrine of consubstantiation. This is the only original distinction between the Lutheran and the reformed Helvetian or Calvinistic churches. On this very point, however, the opinions of the reformed churches had undergone a change, which brought them nearer to Luther than to Zuinglius, their first leader: for the "real presence," and actual participation of the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's supper, so unequivocally taught by Bucer and Calvin, and now generally received by the reformed churches, was much farther removed from Zuinglius's opinion than from that of Luther; and though his more bigoted followers refused to see it, or to listen to any terms of union, Melancthon and his friends would have readily consented to it. Indeed, they received from their more zealous brethren, the appellation of "Crypto-Calvinists," for the sentiments which they discovered.

On another important point, also, the reformed churches had now almost all of them embraced Luther's sentiments; viz. respecting the doctrines of divine grace. Luther had the sagacity to perceive that there was a fundamental difference between him and Zuinglius on this head. But it is very remarkable that, in the age succeeding the reformation, the Helvetians, generally speaking, were become completely the followers of Luther respecting these doctrines, and the Lutherans the disciples of Zuinglius.

<sup>1</sup> Mosheim.

In reference to controversies in former ages of the church, the Lutherans, from being Augustinians, became Semi-Pelagians, and the Helvetians, from being Semi-Pelagians, were become the followers of Augustin. This applies not, however, to all the Helvetic divines; many of them were originally Augustinian in their sentiments, and fully co-operated with Calvin, in declaring these doctrines to be their common faith. It was from the circumstance of Calvin's standing up as the vindicator of these doctrines, when they began to be less insisted upon by the Lutherans, that his name rather than that of Luther has been applied to this doctrinal system, which afterwards was designated by the term Calvinism, though in reality it differed nothing from the system of the Augustinians, except in its new connexion with the distinguishing doctrine of the Protestants—"justification by faith alone, for the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

The clear understanding of this matter, is of great importance to the illustration of many important passages in the subsequent history of the reformed churches. The accidental origin or propriety of the term is immaterial; the use of a distinguishing epithet is convenient and almost necessary. There are, indeed, different modes of stating the system called Calvinism, as there are diversities in the systems of doctrines opposed to it; and this is likely to be the case, where the question affects the understanding of the entire system of revealed religion, and is connected with so many important inquiries respecting the philosophy of the human mind. Calvinist and Anti-Calvinist, considered as generic distinctions, are of great importance to be correctly understood.

The Calvinist, in *his* view of his opponents, considers the whole question to turn on this point—whether salvation be of GRACE or of WORKS;—meaning by grace, the gratuitous act of the Divine mind towards man,—and by works, every effort which the human mind can put forth towards God, or our fellow-creatures.

For his use of the terms grace and works, he refers to Rom. xi. 5, where St. Paul says, "Even so then, at this present time also, there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise, grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more of grace: otherwise work is no more work." The Anti-Calvinist, of course, does not admit that the apostle is here speaking of an election of individuals to eternal life, as the Calvinist supposes. But, at all events, the apostle is speaking of some election



other, and this is the Calvinist's notion of election to eternal life ; and the text, as to the use and opposition of the terms *grace* and *works*, clearly states his sentiments. The Anti-Calvinist, who divides salvation between *grace* and *works*, cannot say that in those points where it is of *grace* it is any more of *works*, or *vice versâ*. There need not, therefore, be any ambiguity in the terms ; for the Calvinist, — he to whom the term is with propriety applied, — unequivocally maintains, that in the decree of Divine predestination, man's election to eternal salvation by Christ turns upon a gratuitous act of God towards him, and that every thing necessary to the obtaining of salvation, is a consequence flowing from this gratuitous election.

All Anti-Calvinists, not excepting, perhaps, those called Pelagians themselves, assert a co-operation, both on the part of God and of man, in the business of salvation ; and most Calvinists assent to the statement. But the question returns : Is the concurrence of man, in this co-operation, derived from himself as an independent moral agent, or is this concurrence itself an effect of the operation of God ? The operation of God, so far as he is graciously pleased to work in the salvation of man, cannot be supposed to be defective ; but is there left a decisive point, where man may fail, or may not fail, in his operation ? This is the hinge of the whole controversy, and the real question on which the parties join issue. The Calvinist maintains that the operation of God, according to the purpose of his grace, is decisive ; the Anti-Calvinist, that the will or act of man is decisive, and preponderating. However strongly the Calvinist expresses himself upon the constituted necessity of man's co-operation with God in his salvation, and however he makes it a part of that salvation, that he does co-operate, because he is operated upon both to will and to do, yet he rests the decisive term upon the will and act of God. The Anti-Calvinist, however much he ascribes to Divine grace, in the plan of salvation in general, or however he depreciates the unassisted powers of man at every step, still makes the decisive point to turn on the agency of man. How extremely little soever be that which his humility will ascribe to human agency, yet there, it is obvious, the whole must hinge ; for of that alone in the co-operation it can be said, it may, or it may not, fail.

It is worthy of remark, that the great philosophical question concerning liberty and necessity, which has engaged the minds of inquiring men in all ages, and which appears so much connected with the Calvinistic controversy, did not always enter into it. Many who were strictly necessitarians, on the metaphysical



question, were very far from any acknowledgment of the influences of Divine grace, or of an election of God to salvation by Christ. And, on the other hand, many who never studied the philosophical question, or granted such power in man as the opponents of the necessitarians contended for, still thought that that power, whatever it was, contributed nothing to their salvation, but was opposed and contrary to it, and that their salvation was alone to be ascribed to a supernatural agency, which God knows how to render efficient; who also, by his wisdom, could govern a world full of contingencies. How—they attempted not to explain. When pressed with difficulties and inconsistencies, they would probably have been disposed to answer in the language of an English philosopher, who, speaking of liberty as it is opposed to necessity, observed: “All theory is against it, all experience is for it. I feel that I am free; and there is an end of it<sup>1</sup>.”

It is probable, however, that these two systems of philosophy, as they were respectively embraced, had an influence in dividing the Calvinists into two schools, the sublapsarians and the supralapsarians. The sublapsarians opened their scheme no farther than as man, in his present fallen state, is the subject of election; which they consider as God's interposed mercy to rescue from a common and an inevitable destruction, some particular objects of his choice; the rest of mankind being passed over, and suffered to earn the wages of sin, to which they are of themselves inclined, and to “eat the fruit of their own doings.” The supralapsarians, who are necessitarians in philosophy, held the same opinions respecting man in his fallen state, and the manner in which he was affected by the decrees of God in that state; but their scheme was more comprehensive. They thought that all events whatsoever are ordered by a divine decree, and that, by a necessary consequence, they cannot fall out otherwise than was before ordained in the counsels of God; as well those that are accomplished by intelligent voluntary agents, as those where mere inert matter is employed. The fall of angels and of man, as well as every thing else which can affect the present or the everlasting condition of his creatures, is all referred to his will, which nothing has resisted. So that all were created by God for his glory, and for the manifestation of his perfections; as well those who, by their own agency, were to become sinful—“to shew his wrath and make his power known,” in their deserved punishments, as those who are main-

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Johnson.

tained in their station, or are "ordained, as vessels of mercy," to everlasting glory, "to make known the riches of his grace." The decree concerning the former, is called "reprobation;" that concerning the latter, "predestination unto life."

Of sin—they taught that God was not its author. It is the creature's perversion of that which was created right, and, on his part, the violation of that law which the Creator had imposed upon him; nevertheless, so far as it produces positive effects and consequences, it is absolutely under the control and direction of God; that where the moral agent does most freely his own pleasure in his transgression, he does that "which God's counsel and foreknowledge had before determined to be done," and only that. There were many divines who were firmly persuaded of these truths, and who, when they thought of God and of his providence, could not attribute less to his operation in all things; but who, notwithstanding, for fear of misconceptions of their meaning, refrained from the public statement of them, and in their preaching opened their scheme no farther than the sublapsarians. But it was urged by others, that the doctrine is part of God's revealed word; and that it was encouraging and satisfying to pious minds, to understand that evil, of what kind soever it might be, was not a fire-brand thrown about at random by the wrath or the lust of fools, but, as it were, a destructive element, in its most lawless excesses directed and managed by the unerring wisdom of the Almighty, and either through judgment or mercy made subservient to his glory.

There was also a third class of Calvinists, called universalists, who differed from the sublapsarians only in connecting the doctrine of gratuitous election, not with the gift of a Saviour, which they stated to be universal in its object, and to have an equal respect to all mankind, but with the operation of the Holy Spirit, which rendered redemption effectual to the objects of the Divine choice; while others, though redeemed by the blood of Christ, had no mind or will of themselves to believe and be saved, nor could they have in the present fallen state of man. This, practically, differed nothing from the doctrine of the other Calvinists; but it seemed to lead to a very different conception of the nature of the atonement, and of the vicarious sacrifice of Christ.

Under the one or the other of these three divisions of Calvinism, we may class, with very few exceptions, all the divines of the reformed church, at the close of the fifteenth century. Geneva was now become what Wittenberg had once

been, the spiritual metropolis of the Protestant world. Its university "was in such high repute among the reformed churches, that it was resorted to from all quarters, by such as were desirous of a learned education; and more especially by students of theology, whose circumstances in life permitted them to frequent this famous seminary<sup>1</sup>."

Hence we perceive an additional reason, why the name of Calvin, the founder of this university, rather than that of Luther, should become attached, as an epithet, to the doctrinal scheme of the first reformer in general.

But Geneva did not very long continue its supremacy. The French reformed church, with which it was most nearly connected, by political intrigue and cruel persecution, soon became trampled beneath the feet of its Romish adversaries<sup>2</sup>.

Geneva soon sunk in estimation with the church of England, because of the countenance she gave to the presbyterian form of church government, and of the violent attack by some of her divines upon the ancient episcopal government, which was still retained with considerable splendour in England and in Ireland.

But another cause, productive of consequences of far more importance to the celebrity of the original school of Geneva, began to operate about the commencement of the seventeenth century, and by no very slow degrees it altered, at length, the whole face of the reformed church. This was the rise and progress of the religious tenets called Arminianism. In some points of view, Arminianism may be represented as an attempt to graft the Protestant doctrine of justification by faith, not on the Augustinian notions of grace, but on those of the Semi-Pelagians.

<sup>1</sup> Mosheim.

<sup>2</sup> The French reformed church, from the accession of Henry IV., was placed in a situation that could hardly bid fair for permanent tranquillity. They were too strong a political body to be crushed. The Papists know not how to tolerate. The device for their preservation was, granting them the possession of certain strong fortified towns for their security, the principal of which was Rochelle. This scheme violated the integrity of the French monarchy, and gave rise to the contentions and civil broils which might be expected. The power of the crown prevailed under Louis XIII. and his minister Cardinal Richelieu, to the depriving them of their towns, and of all their securities. Rochelle, after a long and difficult siege, was taken from them in 1628. From this period, the decline of protestantism in France is dated. Left to the mercy and generosity of a papistical government, their situation was most deplorable. At length, through the counsels of the Jesuits, it was resolved to extirpate them altogether. Louis XIV., in the year 1685, revoked the edict of Nantes, and they were persecuted to apostasy, to flight, or to death.

For the production of saving faith in the human mind, though the co-operation of Divine grace was deemed necessary, it was never wanting, and consequently the efficacy depended on the free will or agency of man. Dr. Mosheim describes Arminianism as “ deriving its existence from an excessive propensity to improve the faculty of reason, and to follow its dictates and discoveries.” And if we have regard to the characters of many of the first converts to Arminianism, there appears a great deal to illustrate the truth of the origin here ascribed to it. It appears, in fact, as the first revolt of the philosophical mind from the shackles of that authority which its education, under the disciples of the first reformers, had imposed upon it. Accordingly, we find the result to have been the substitution of no one system, but a departure in a great variety of ways from what had previously been considered as the standard of orthodoxy.

The Arminians derive their name from James Arminius, who at first was pastor of Amsterdam, and afterward professor of divinity at Leyden. To this last office he was appointed in the year 1603. Many of the clergy thought the appointment a dangerous one. They said that Arminius was not very orthodox, and that he went too much by reason<sup>1</sup>. Some leading and learned men, however, among the laity in Holland, greatly countenanced the opinions of Arminius, and began to demand a revision of the Belgic confession of faith and of the catechism. Thus, as the majority of the clergy complained, “ the confession of faith, which had been sealed with the blood of so many martyrs, was called in question.”

In his personal and avowed opposition to the established doctrines of the Belgic churches, Arminius seemed to have left undisputed the doctrine of justification by faith<sup>2</sup>. He declared, also, that “ he never opposed the doctrine of the certain perseverance of the truly believing, nor, thus far, was he willing to oppose it, because he confessed himself as yet unable to answer the testimonies of Scripture which stood for it.” His disciples, however, very soon found the answers which their master considered as a desideratum; and then justification by faith, as taught in the school of the remonstrants, became a different doctrine, and did not include, as among the orthodox,

<sup>1</sup> Brandt.

<sup>2</sup> Arminius had, however, been convicted of maintaining, contrary to the received doctrine, that “ the righteousness of Christ is not in justification imputed for righteousness, but that faith itself, or the act of believing, was the righteousness by which we are justified.”

a title to, and certainty of final salvation. It was in his account of the production of true faith in the heart of fallen man, that Arminius himself shewed his departure from the received opinions. He admitted, indeed, the doctrines of the fall, of regeneration, and of the necessity of Divine grace; but he explained the work of the Spirit, in the recovery of man, and in the production of a true faith, very differently from the reformers. With him it was an operation that might be resisted on the part of man, and rendered abortive; and, therefore, depended for its prevailing efficacy on something in the human mind itself, which might co-operate with, or might actually defeat, the purpose and operation of Divine grace. This was the turning point. By a natural consequence, election or predestination to life, depended not on the purpose of grace or decree of God, but on the foresight of faith as its *antecedent cause* or *condition* on the part of man. Gomar, who spoke the general sentiments of the reformed churches at that period, objected to the term *irresistible* grace, because of its ambiguity; but stated, that in the regeneration of man, that grace of the Holy Spirit was necessary, which works so efficaciously, that, the resistance of the flesh being overcome, whoever are made partakers of this grace are certainly and infallibly converted to God by the same; that, consequently, faith was not the cause, but the fruit and effect of an election of grace.

Arminius died A.D. 1609. His opinions had many advocates, especially Utenbogardus, a man of great influence with the states of Holland, Simon Episcopius, and the celebrated Hugo Grotius. A new school of young divines had also been formed at Leyden, under the instructions of the late professor. Some embraced, others improved, the system of their master. All agreed to unfetter the minds in their free inquiries, from the venerated authorities of the first reformers, and were charged with treating their names with contempt. Many did not stop at Arminianism, but sought for a religion which appeared to them still more agreeable to the dictates of enlightened reason, and advanced, more or less, towards Socinianism. The influence of the remonstrants, as well as their enlarged views, appeared very evident in the appointment of a successor to Arminius. Notwithstanding the strong opposition of the orthodox clergy, seconded by the very serious admonition of the British monarch, Vorstius, a man who was more than suspected of inclining to Socinianism, was elected to the vacant chair at Leyden.

To no sect or party which arose in this age, can we give the

praise of toleration, and of liberal treatment towards their opponents. Though free inquiry was the motto of the remonstrants, yet, in the part of the Union where they prevailed, in Holland especially, they were guilty of great oppression, with respect to the teachers who retained the former doctrines of the Belgic churches. The reformed, also, in their turn, for they were greatly superior in numbers throughout the confederacy of the Seven United Provinces taken together, were too intolerant in their treatment of the Arminians. This sect, however, it should be remembered, by their great influence in Holland, and their union with the heads of the republican party in that province, threatened danger to the Union, and had even enlisted soldiers for the defence of their faction. Maurice, prince of Orange, the military head of the Union, took decisive measures against them, and shewed great favour to the orthodox; from ambitious motives, according to the opinions of some, they being the more numerous party.

The issue, so far as it relates to the concerns of the church, was the calling of a national council of the Belgic churches, by the authority of the States General. This synod was held in the city of Dort, in the years 1618 and 1619, and, as far as circumstances would admit, was rendered a general council of the reformed churches. To twenty-six divines of the United Provinces, were added twenty-eight foreign divines; and there were also five professors of divinity, and sixteen laymen. Five divines were sent by king James from Great Britain, among whom were Carleton, bishop of Llandaff, Hall and Davenant, afterwards bishops of Norwich and Salisbury. The reformed church of France also had chosen their representatives at the synod, but they were prevented from attending by the French king. Deputies attended from the Palatinate, Hesse, Geneva, Bremen, Embden, and from the churches of some other places. The synod of Dort may therefore be considered, though not strictly such, as approaching to the character of a general council of the reformed churches, and, in an historic point of view, may be justly regarded as manifesting the standard of their faith in this age. The articles of this synod, which are drawn up with great care, supported by authorities from Holy Writ, the opposite errors at the same time being stated, and, according to the views of the synod, refuted by the same authority, are best entitled, at least of any public document, to be considered as the standard of the doctrines of grace, as held by the reformed churches at the beginning of the seventeenth century — those



doctrines which have since been generally denominated Calvinism.

It may, I think, justly be called a common standard of Calvinism, for the three varieties of Calvinists, supralapsarians, sublapsarians, and the universal Calvinists, who differ from the last mentioned by connecting the Divine decrees with the work of the Spirit, rather than with the gift of a Saviour, were all concerned in drawing up these articles, and none obtained the statement of their own views exclusively.

I believe it may be admitted, without prejudice of the truth, whether we approve these doctrines, or prefer the alterations introduced by the remonstrants and a few more early reformers, that the synod of Dort presents a fair general exhibition of the religious system of the reformers of the fifteenth century. Its decisions were, at the time, declared to be in unison with the former Belgic confession, with the standard of the other reformed churches on the Continent, and with the doctrinal articles of the churches of England and Scotland. The French church even adopted them by a national council held at Alais in the following year. On the other hand, the greater part of the Lutherans, with the professors of Wittemberg, declared for the doctrinal system of the Arminians; and these opinions, though proscribed and persecuted in the United Provinces for five years, still maintained their ground and won the approbation of many, so that in the next generation they obtained the ascendancy in most of the churches of the reformed; and the truth — if we admit that it was with the first reformers — was exchanged for a new system of divinity.

The synod of Dort may be compared, in one respect, to the council of Nice, — it served to mark the orthodoxy of that generation; but it marked, at the same time, the period of the rise of an opposite system, which, though condemned, was almost immediately to supplant it. Arminianism certainly triumphed very generally, in the reformed churches, over the decrees of the synod of Dort; and that assembly served only to collect the opinions of the former age, and to mark this new era in the religious sentiments of the greater part of the Protestant world.

Other and farther departures from the former faith of Protestants followed, indeed, in the train of Arminianism. A system of ethics, which was almost silent on the peculiar doctrines of Revelation, and might well stand without them — Arianism, Socinianism, and Deism, which even destroyed its fundamentals — was openly professed or secretly embraced by many. Faithful

witnesses to the truths of Revelation, however, have not been wanting in all the churches. The metaphysical system of Leibnitz and Wolf, which was for a period the leading one among the learned, reconciled some of the great reasoners of mankind to the statements even of Calvinism; but during the next century and a half, it was said, and sometimes said with truth, that more of the peculiarities of the Gospel were retained in the Roman Catholic churches, than in assemblies held by the successors of the evangelical reformers. Geneva itself was certainly not one of the exceptions; her teachers first became Arminian and Latitudinarian, and afterwards descended in the scale almost to Deism itself.

In the age in which we live, we trust things are altering for the better in Geneva and many of her offspring; but at the time he took his survey, there was too much truth in the estimate of the infidel historian Gibbon: "The doctrine of a Protestant church is far removed from the knowledge and belief of its private members; the forms of orthodoxy, the articles of faith, are subscribed with a sigh or a smile by the modern clergy. Yet the friends of Christianity are alarmed at the boundless impulse of inquiry and scepticism. The predictions of the Catholics are accomplished, and the web of mystery is unravelled by the Arminians, Arians, and Socinians, — whose numbers must not be computed from their separate congregations; and the pillars of Revelation are shaken by those men, who preserve the name without the substance of religion; who indulge the license without the temper of philosophy<sup>1</sup>."

With respect to Geneva, Voltaire's boast — that in Calvin's own town only a few of the very meanest of the populace acknowledged the principles of Revelation — will not be soon forgotten.

In another modern author, we read respecting Geneva, that "Luxury and idleness exerted their usual influence; a universal relaxation had taken place; but the French Revolution coming towards the latter end of this wicked age, swept away together vices and virtues, property and life<sup>2</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> History, chap. lii. end.

<sup>2</sup> Simond's Switzerland.

## SECT. V.

## CHURCHES OF THE BRITISH ISLES.

In the former part of our history we saw the reformation fully established in England, by the accession of Elizabeth. Through her assistance, and the ardour of the Scottish reformers, the yoke of the papacy had also been broken in Scotland. Ireland seemed to follow the destinies of Great Britain. The northern parts received an impression from Scotland, while the main part of the island obeyed the impulse of the English government. But it was rather the oppressing of popery and the spoiling of its wealth, than the conversion of the people to the knowledge of the truth. The Scotch and English settlers were Protestants; beyond this pale, Ireland was still Roman Catholic.

The church of England differed from the other churches of the reformed or Helvetian persuasion, only in the retention of the ancient government, and of some few institutions of the primitive church. She was, properly speaking, an ancient church reformed and recovered from the Roman apostasy, without a dissolution of her ancient society or complete revolution in the institutions of her government. With most of the other reformed churches it was different; they originated as new societies, formed afresh amidst the convulsions of the reformation, which had in many places overturned all established order and authority, both civil and ecclesiastical.

The reader is acquainted with the state of the English government at this period, and the circumstances of our history, which had concentrated all the power of the state in the person of the princes of the house of Tudor. Accordingly, when the councils of the monarch were influenced to give ascendancy to the reformed religion in opposition to popery, he claimed the right of interposing with a regulating hand.

Indeed, the principles of the first English reformers were very favourable to this exercise of royal authority. They understood from the precepts of the New Testament, that, as the servants and ministers of Christ, their submission to the civil power, in all things not contrary to the will of God, was most scrupulously to be rendered "for conscience' sake," as to a paramount ordinance of God; and they charged upon the partisans of Rome—as a mark noted in Scripture, of their anti-christian apostasy—their encroachments on the power of the

magistrates, and their despising of the temporal governments. Hence, the doctrines of "passive obedience" and "non-resistance," which so peculiarly distinguish the earlier days of the reformed church of England. And however these doctrines may sound in this age of liberty,—and disgusting as they appear, when, from interested motives, they are offered as the incense of flattery to princes,—or however they may be sometimes too partially applied, under a mixed form of government,—they still demand the serious consideration of all denominations of Christians who desire to learn and practise the will of Christ, and must command our respect, in those who "for conscience towards God endure grief, suffering wrongfully."

Perhaps all who are acquainted with history will, at least, allow that it were better for the world and for religion, were all those who addict themselves to the work of the ministry, for that reason, to have done with worldly politics, and, as far as positive duty permits, to consider themselves of no party and of no country, satisfied to "submit to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake," and to seek the things that make for peace, believing that "the powers that be are ordained of God," and that "He ruleth the kingdoms of men," and "setteth over them whomsoever He will." Had these maxims been observed, the place of worship, at least, would have enjoyed a truce from the turmoil of political contests; and "the patient abiding of the meek" might have formed a claim, sooner respected by their countrymen, for the rights of conscience, than all the tumults kindled by the fiery zeal of well-meaning, though sometimes very factious divines.

The character of the two national churches established in Great Britain, differed much in their notions respecting the limits of that submission which was due to the civil power. This arose in part, perhaps, from the different circumstances in which the reformation was introduced into the two kingdoms. But it is well known that the political principles of the early Scottish reformers, with respect to the nature of the sovereign power, were very different from those entertained by the reformers in England. They seem to have approximated, in some of their leading sentiments, to those which have been laid down as maxims in this revolutionary age. One advantage, however, Scotland possessed over the more southern part of the island: the great mass of her population were more deeply impressed and interested by the doctrines of the Protestant faith; so that the clergy of the Scottish church were strong through the attachment of the people, and formed a

very powerful body in the state, which often, amidst contending parties, in the unsettled government of this country, enabled them to dictate to the civil power. Their notions, also, of ecclesiastical authority, were far from being low; and their sentences of excommunication, when pronounced against some of the leading persons of the times, occasionally put us in mind of the Romish church in the plenitude of its power. The situation of the governors of the church of England, and still more of that of Ireland, was not so favourable. Except in the great towns, and some particular counties and districts, even in England, the light of the reformation had not penetrated far among the population.

In the parliament which met in the year 1562, the lord keeper Bacon, in his speech to the upper house, complains “of the great want of pastors, and that some of them were much under-qualified.” He speaks of “the relaxation of discipline, and of the churches being unfrequented.” The speaker of the house of commons touches upon the true cause of the insufficiency of the means of instruction, to counteract the evils of the times. “Many of the schools and benefices are seized, the education of youth disappointed, and the succours of knowledge cut off. Covetousness has laid her hands upon impropriations. The universities are decayed, and great market-towns without either school or preacher; for the poor vicar is turned off with twenty pounds, and the bulk of the church’s patrimony is impropriated and diverted to other uses. For want of a fund for instruction, the people are bred in ignorance and obstinacy.” He takes notice of the progress of error—“a hydra with a hundred heads;” he instances “Pelagians, Libertines, and Papists, and such others, who set up their own traditions, their appetites, and mistakes, for a rule of life.” “In walking the streets of London, he heard oaths in the greatest part of the people’s mouths.”

This sacrilegious plunder of ecclesiastical property, and the neglect of providing religious instruction commensurate with the wants of the people, and of properly diffusing, and supporting with becoming decency, the established means of public worship, may justly be reckoned as one great cause of the overthrow of the British monarchy and constitution at a subsequent period: the crown and ancient nobility of England paid dearly for their robberies.

We have a very awful picture of the state of the nation at this time, in a sermon preached at St. Paul’s Cross<sup>1</sup>:—“The people come to church to satisfy the statute, hear sermons and re-

<sup>1</sup> By Robinson, bishop of Bangor. COLLIER, vol. ii. p. 508.

ceive the sacrament, to avoid singularity—religion was little more than mode and decency with a great many—some people pretended to orthodoxy for secular views and liberty of practice: this man is a great enemy of superstition, because he has a mind to live at large; he is for the reformation, because a monastery, or some part of it, has fallen to his share: and thus Popish lands make Protestant landlords.”

Mr. Strype's view of the state of the nation is equally unfavourable: “The substantials being lost in contending for externals, the churchmen heaped up many benefices upon themselves, and resided upon none. Neglecting their cures, many of them alienated their lands, made unreasonable leases and waste of woods, and granted reversions and advowsons to their wives and children. Among the laity there was little devotion; the Lord's day was greatly profaned and little observed; the common prayers not frequented; some lived without any service of God at all; many were mere heathens and atheists: the queen's own court a harbour for epicures and atheists, and a sort of privileged place, because it stood in no parish.”

The queen, on whom so much depended, whatsoever might be her motives, was certainly firm to the Protestant interest. She was not to be moved either by the threats of the pope, or, when they had been tried in vain, by his allurements. Her answer was, “She could not find that the bishop of Rome had any more authority than any other bishop.” Yet her own judgment would have retained somewhat more of the ancient ceremonial of the church. If her own chapel, as she seemed to wish, had been the model for the churches of England, she would have retained the altar with its crucifix, and burning tapers, and all the accompaniments of instrumental music, as some of the Lutheran churches had done. But her Protestant subjects were so averse to every thing of the kind, that she had great difficulty to restrain them from defacing the ornaments of the churches, from demolishing the painted glass in the windows, and even from violating the tombs and monuments.

The reformers made a very general stand against the permission of images in churches, as a matter not indifferent. Bishop Jewel, on this occasion, declared in a letter to a friend, his determination to decline his bishopric. The queen yielded, but retained her own crucifix; and was highly incensed with Sandys, when he remonstrated with her on the subject, and informed her that it was an object of idolatrous worship to the superstitious about the court. The marriage of the clergy she much disliked,



and treated their wives on some occasions with marked insult. But those who are acquainted with the character of Elizabeth, will not perhaps attribute this to any religious scruple; there was a weakness in the queen's character in this respect, that betrayed itself in some occasions towards her lay courtiers.

Archbishop Parker, on occasion of an order from the queen prohibiting the appearance of the wives of the clergy, within the precincts of colleges and cathedrals, wrote a strong remonstrance to the secretary Cecil. He complains "that the order was drawn up without advising with any ecclesiastic." He says—"I wish I had never engaged in this station." "It would trouble me if the clergy should be forced upon any incomppliance, and declare with the apostles that we must obey God rather than man." "We have no small number in our contemptible party, that have courage and conscience enough to sacrifice their lives in defence of their religion<sup>1</sup>."

When the archbishop made a visitation of his diocese, he found it in a most deplorable situation. He represented to the queen the great want of properly instructed preachers of the Gospel. The necessities of the times, as we have seen, had led to the admission into holy orders of many persons who had been brought up to mechanical employments, and were not such as could command the respect of their parishioners. This led to an injunction of the archbishop to the bishops of his province, respecting the qualifications of persons to be ordained in future. He also found that many of his clergy were mass-priests in disguise.

The condition of the universities was equally discouraging to the restorers of the reformation. Bishop Jewel, in a letter to Bullinger, tells him, "Our universities are in a lamentable condition, and almost quite lost to all sense of orthodoxy. There are not above two in Oxford of our sentiment; and those so far dispirited as to be good for nothing. Thus friar Soto and another Spanish monk have entirely destroyed Peter Martyr's plantation, and made a mere wilderness of the Lord's vineyard. You can scarcely imagine so great a ravage and desolation of principles could have happened in so short a time."

In these circumstances, it was the more to be lamented, that many who might have been useful preachers of the Gospel, felt themselves excluded by the act of uniformity. We know not which most to lament, that they should think themselves bound in conscience to decline the ministry of the word at a time when

<sup>1</sup> Strype's Life of Parker.

it was so much needed, and such an effectual door was opened; or that some way was not found, at conniving at the indifferent ceremonies that hurt their weak consciences. Some, who, in their own judgments, were for what they thought a purer form of worship,—that is, one more conformable to the reformed churches abroad,—for the sake of the greater good, did conform to the rites established by law. Nor is it clear indeed that any thing short of the entire change of the ecclesiastical polity, and the renouncing of the supreme authority over the church on the part of the queen, would have satisfied many of the others. Sovereigns of a far less imperious character than Elizabeth, had contended for this point against the Roman church, when its power was entire. Besides, we must recollect that some who were of the greatest authority among the Puritans, as they began to be called, had mingled with their religious principles political ones of fundamental importance. Knox and Goodman had openly denied the right of the queen to her crown, as being a woman; yet with great inconsistency, or the discovery of a worse principle, they declared they were willing to allow of the title of Elizabeth, but only upon the grounds of her being “a good and godly woman,” who had “an extraordinary call from God to reform the church and state.”<sup>1</sup> So that they seemed to coincide with the Anabaptists, that ‘dominion was founded on grace,’ and that rulers, whose religion did not please them, might be deposed, perhaps murdered by their subjects<sup>1</sup>: so near, in their extremes, did the opposite systems of popery and of the Puritan reformers meet. And these sentiments, held by the more violent of the two parties, who stood opposed to the settlement of religion in England, may certainly be urged to exculpate, in some measure, the severe acts of the queen’s government against both Papists and Puritans. But, as is too commonly the case, the innocent were involved with the guilty.

In the convocation that met at the same time with the parliament, there appeared a disposition on the part of many of the Protestant clergy, to bring the rites and ceremonies of the church into a nearer conformity to the practice of the church of Geneva. There was, indeed, but little to be asked; but great importance was attached to that little, and the spirit of discord produced the most serious results from the denial. A question, it should seem, had been put to Calvin, respecting the use of “the absolution” after “the confession,” in the public service. Though Calvin

<sup>1</sup> See Collier’s Eccl. Hist., part. ii. chap. vi.

objected to some "trifling things" in the English service, he had the candour to declare, not only that "he approved of this primitive institution, but that it had been his wish to introduce an absolution into the Geneva office; but fearing it would be complained of as a novelty, he had complied too easily with the omission." He was also questioned respecting "the significance of repeating a form of words to each communicant at the Lord's supper," and concerning "the frequency of communion," and "the propriety of private communion in case of sickness." His reply was, "He generally disused the repetition because it would take up too much time." "He declared for a monthly celebration, though he had been unable to bring the church of Geneva to communicate so frequently." They celebrated the Lord's supper only at Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide. He determined; "that the sacrament ought not to be denied to the sick; that some of their friends and neighbours should communicate with them; that it would better guard against superstition, to consecrate the holy elements at the sick man's house, rather than to bring them from the church."

The authority of Calvin had, probably, at this time, reduced the demands of those who were for bringing the church of England nearer to the Geneva model. What was chiefly asked, was, "the forbidding of lay, and especially of woman's baptism"—"the omission of the sign of the cross in baptism"—"that kneeling at the Lord's supper should be left more at discretion"—"the disuse of instrumental music, and the responsive reading or singing of the psalms"—"that eopes, and surplices, and square caps, be laid aside"—"that the festivals kept in honour of the saints be abrogated or abated." No alteration whatever was made, or asked, in any point of doctrine, by the divines of the school of Geneva; unless we are to trace to this source, as I think we may, the omission in the longer article, respecting the descent of Christ into hell. A stricter code of discipline was moved for, and a catechism drawn up by Nowel, dean of St. Paul's, at that time prolocutor of the Lower House, was sanctioned by the convocation.

The contest respecting the ecclesiastical habits became extremely violent after the convocation; and in the year 1564, the square cap, the surplice, and the tippet, which the queen had enjoined, and which a considerable portion of the clergy set their faces against, because they were worn by the Roman Catholic clergy, were now the serious subjects of religious controversy, which the people were led to contend against, as fundamental corruptions of the faith.

These they were taught to consider as the last strong holds of their sufficiently hated popery, and in the abolition of which consisted their Christian liberty wherewith Christ had made them free! But the greater part of the clergy, however, thought it a small point to yield to the wishes of the queen, who had been raised up as an instrument of so much good to the reformation, and on whose favour and stability to the cause so much might still depend. They thought also that, as the legislature had made ceremonial observances imperative by law, they were no longer 'indifferent,' and that, as good subjects, they were bound to maintain the royal authority. On this principle archbishop Parker acted, — as some have thought, with unnecessary zeal; as without his support, it is conjectured the queen might have yielded. This, however, is uncertain: he knew the queen's will. At one time, indeed, her government seemed to relax in enforcing conformity, through the interest of the earl of Leicester, who was become the patron of the Puritans. But the archbishop understood that it was only intended that the opprobriousness of the unpopular measure should fall upon him; and he declared that "for the honour of his sovereign he was willing to bear it." Parker, it is well known, disliked some of the garments then used; but he thought 'both the honour and authority of the queen were committed in the question, through the principles of disobedience which were inculcated by some popular divines.' In consequence of enforcing the habits, some of the clergy quitted their ministry. Their conduct in this respect was blamed by Bullinger, the chief minister of Zurich, whose answer to the queries put to him on the subject, as appears from a letter written to him by Grindal, the bishop of London, had reconciled some, both of the clergy and of the people, to the lawfulness of wearing these habits. Beza rather praised the malcontents.

The greater part of the nonconforming divines still thought it unlawful to separate from a church where the Word and the sacraments were truly administered, and therefore "continued preaching up and down where they could be dispensed with for the habits." Some few, however, thought "the idolatrous gear," as they termed the habits appointed by law, to be a sufficient reason for breaking the unity of the church, and for dispensing with the Divine precept — "Obey them that have the rule over you;" and being once relieved from the bonds of subjection, they voted out the Book of Common Prayer altogether, and adopted the Geneva Service Book in its stead. We can hardly conceive any thing more directly contrary to the senti-

ments of Calvin himself<sup>1</sup>, as already referred to in this history, whose authority these separatists professed to set so high.

Such was the origin of the Presbyterians in England<sup>2</sup>, the first permanent body of dissenters from the established church. This act of separation was far from meeting the approbation of the great body of the Puritans, or of the pastors of the reformed churches abroad: even Beza, the successor of Calvin, who had too much encouraged these dissensions, disapproved of the measure. We must, indeed, be totally ignorant of the history of these churches at this period, to have any doubt as to what they would have thought of the act of any of their deprived ministers exercising their functions in separate congregations; and severe as the measures pursued by the queen and the English bishops appear in a more enlightened age, it is very certain that Calvin and the senate of Geneva, Knox and the general assembly of Scotland, and the synods of the French reformed church, would have acted with full as much authority and rigour<sup>3</sup>.

The common enemy, the Papists, were not slow in availing themselves of the advantages afforded them by these dissensions<sup>4</sup>. There were instances of Jesuits who feigned themselves to be

<sup>1</sup> This great reformer observes, in a letter to the protector Somerset: "I do highly approve that there should be a certain form of prayer and ecclesiastical rites, from which it should not be lawful for the pastors themselves to discede; 1. That provision may be made for some people's ignorance and unskilfulness: 2. That the consent of all churches among themselves may the more plainly appear: 3. That order may be taken against unsettled levity of such as delight in innovations. Thus there ought to be an established catechism, an established administration of sacraments; as also a public form of prayer."

<sup>2</sup> A.D. 1569.

<sup>3</sup> See Bingham's French Church's Apology for the Church of England.

<sup>4</sup> The prospects of the reformation were considered as extremely dark and discouraging at this time, as was felt particularly during a temporary illness of the queen, when a popish princess stood next in succession to the throne; and we may consider the prolonged reign of Elizabeth as a kind gift of Providence, both to the church and the nation of England.

In the year 1569, the pope's bull against the queen was formally published. In the usual style, he calls himself, "prince over all people and all kingdoms, to pluck up, destroy, scatter, consume, plant, and build." "Elizabeth, the pretended queen, is excommunicated and anathematised; all her subjects are absolved from their allegiance, nay, placed under the same curse if they obey her. Among her crimes is counted — that she has abolished the sacrifice of the mass, prayers, fastings, choice of meats, unmarried life, and the Catholic rites and ceremonies; commanding books to be read in the whole realm, containing manifest heresies, and impious mysteries, and institutions by herself entertained and observed according to the prescript of CALVIN, to be likewise observed by her subjects."

Puritan divines, and laboured to widen the breach<sup>1</sup>. Sentiments of a very seditious tendency were also known to have been imbibed by some who sided and were numbered with the Puritans. It is remarked, that as the first set of Puritans, who were aged men, died off, a more active and zealous generation succeeded them. Many of these were formed by the instructions of Mr. Cartwright, professor of divinity at Cambridge, who appeared at the head of this new generation, and opened the controversy against the church into other branches, striking at some of the main principles of the hierarchy.

Instead of addressing the queen and her commissioners by humble petitions, as they had previously done, they now began to present addresses, which they called "Admonitions," to the house of commons, where they had many friends and favourers. Their cause, as it was suffering depression from the existing government, appeared to be the cause of liberty; though its tendency certainly was, to impose upon the nation a yoke of ecclesiastical dominion, much heavier and more interfering than the episcopal government and the High Commission.

It is particularly to be remarked, that this contest about religion had the effect of kindling a new spirit in the house of commons, which, though suppressed by the great power of the crown, and the spirit of the princess that wore it, was long fomented in the political contests of that assembly with the executive government; and disaffection to the established religion, uniting itself with the desire of a larger portion of civil liberty, was one of the chief causes which led, in a subsequent age, to the overthrow both of the church and the state, and of the house of commons itself.

About this time also appeared a new class of dissenters, under the name of Brownists or Independents, who for many years were considered in the light of sectaries, equally by the Episcopalians and the Presbyterians, as they disowned alike the authority of the bishops, and that of a synod of ministers and

We cannot be surprised that this proceeding of the pope, in connexion with an actual rebellion which had disturbed the North, should cause severer laws to be enacted against the Papists, and can only blame the want of discrimination that involved too often the innocent with the guilty. We cannot sufficiently lament that it was necessary, with respect both to Puritans and Papists, to make conformity to the Protestant church a test of loyalty to the government, which gave that the appearance of a religious persecution which was only designed as the punishment of faction and rebellion.

<sup>1</sup> Strype's Annals.



elders. They made each separate congregation to be an independent and sovereign republic in itself, appointing, during its pleasure, its own ministers and officers. The Brownists were at first few in number. Brown, their founder, died in the communion of the church of England, and was a man of very indifferent character; but the same principles of church government were revived in a subsequent age, by persons of a very different stamp, and became at length, from choice or necessity, the general principles on which the English dissenters formed their separate communions from the established church.

A combination and judicious mixture of these three forms of government—the Congregational, the Presbyterian, and the Episcopal—is what, according to the opinion of some, the circumstances of the church required, and was equally sanctioned by the example of the primitive churches and the analogy of the civil constitution of the English monarchy. But the restoration of the ancient discipline among the people, and something more of independency in the episcopal order, must necessarily have preceded this improvement. We are not, however, at this early period, to confound the main body of the Puritans with the Presbyterians and Independents. The former still continued members of the church of England, though dissatisfied members; hating separation, unacquainted with toleration, and not without hopes that their own opinions would finally triumph in the national church. The term Puritan, it is evident from contemporary writers, was applied to persons of very different characters<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> The character of the more moderate Puritans, given by a favourer of their cause, is: "Their loyalty to the queen was untainted, and their behaviour peaceable." "They were no enemies to the name and function of bishop, provided he was no more than a stated president of the college of Presbyters in his diocese, and managed the affairs of it with concurrence and assistance. They did not object against prescribed forms of prayer, provided a latitude was indulged the minister to alter or vary some expressions, and to make use of a prayer of his own conception before and after the sermon." "They were determined enemies to popery, and to every thing that had a tendency towards it." "Their zeal for their platform of discipline would, I fear, have betrayed them into the imposition of it upon others, if it had been established by law." "Their notions of the civil and religious rights of mankind were narrow and confused, and derived too much from the theocracy of the Jews. Their behaviour was severe and rigid." "Possibly they might be too censorious. But with all their faults they were the most pious and devout people in the land, men of prayer, both secret and public, as well as in their families." "They had a profound reverence for the holy name of God." "They were strict observers of the Sabbath, spending the whole of it in acts of public and private devotion and charity. It was the distinguishing mark

It cannot be said that the moderate Puritans, who consented to go regularly to church, suffered any persecution from the queen. She declared herself satisfied with this conformity to the laws in her subjects, whether they were Papists or Puritans. But when they declined attendance upon public worship, because they considered it as schismatical, or as superstitious and anti-christian, as the more violent did, they then incurred a penalty; first of a shilling on a Sunday, and afterwards of a pound a month. But it was against the recusant clergy of both parties — the Papists and the Puritans — that the laws were made most severe, and which, when exercised on fellow-Protestants, assumed an appearance of particular harshness. That the Puritan clergy who would not observe the laws and regulations of the church, should not be suffered to exercise their ministry in it, can, however, hardly be objected to : all churches have adopted the same rule.

Parker, archbishop of Canterbury, died in May 1575. The obloquy which he chose to endure, from loyalty to the queen, for zealously carrying into execution the severe laws against the non-

of a Puritan in these times, to see him going to church twice a day with his Bible under his arm ; and, while others were at their sports, on the evening of the Sabbath, they were engaged with their families in reading Scripture, singing psalms," &c. — NEALE.

Of the undissembled piety of some of the puritanically inclined, of the goodness of their intentions, and — although their historian admits they might be too censorious — of the justness of their censures on the ignorance and worldly-mindedness, and even profligacy, of some among the conforming clergy, we have no reason to doubt ; nor yet of the truth of the sketch which Dr. Whitgift has given us of the spirit of disaffection which was nurtured amongst the more zealous of them : " If a man in some congregations commend the magistrates and such as be in authority ; if he exhort to obedience, if he move unto peace ; if he confirm the rites and orders by public authority established — though he do it never so truly, never so learnedly — he shall scarce be heard with patience : but shall be sent away with all kinds of opprobries and reproach. But if he nip at superiors, and reprove those that are in authority — though they be absent and not in place to hear — if he shall inveigh against laws and orders established, and talk of matters that tend to contention rather than to edification — though it be done never so untruly, never so unlearnedly, as commonly it is — they flock unto him like bees ; they esteem him as a god ; they extol him up to heaven, even as the Corinthians and Galatians did their false prophets and contentious teachers. And yet, notwithstanding, do they — these teachers — colour and cloake this peevish and sinister affection with dissembled gesture, countenance, and words, when they be in the presence of those that may hurt them, or do them good. I would to God they did not deceive some whose duty and office it were rather to suppress this fond affection than to nourish it. Specially, seeing it tended to two principal evils, disobedience towards the magistrates, and flat anarchy."

conformists, has rested upon his memory ; and whatever apology may be found for him, in the maxims of the age in which he lived, and the example of contemporary divines, who held the first place in other churches, each succeeding age has been more and more enlightened to see the impropriety of such a zeal in a Christian bishop. His successor Grindal, though compelled to execute the same laws, and more convinced, as it should seem, in his latter days, of the necessity of discouraging non conformity, has been universally admired for his milder exercise of authority, and for his backwardness and evident unwillingness to have recourse to their utmost severity. It is but justice also to remember the motive of the late archbishop. " He declared himself not so much concerned for the tippet, surplice, wafer-bread, or such like ceremonies, as for the authority of the laws which enjoined them : that if public provisions are once disregarded and treated with contempt, the government must sink of course." On the death of Parker, the metropolitan see was kept vacant for nine months.

It was during this interval, that two Dutch Anabaptists were burnt in Smithfield. Fox, the martyrologist, earnestly petitioned the queen that their lives might be spared, but in vain. She said, " She considered herself necessitated to this severity ; for having punished traitors, if she now spared the blasphemers, the world would condemn her in being more earnest in asserting her own safety than God's honour." Such, as we have before had occasion to remark, was the motive of the rulers of this age, for the capital punishment of heretics. Grindal presided over the church from 1576 to 1583. The commencement of his episcopate was rendered remarkable by a great mortality among the bishops. Seven died in the space of two years, most of whom had been appointed at the settlement of the reformation. The good archbishop very soon fell under the displeasure of the queen, and experienced the weight of the inordinate power then lodged in the crown, which in those days neither nobles nor parliaments could withstand. His resolute opposition to the queen's will respecting the suppression of clerical meetings, known by the name of " Prophesyings," was the occasion of this breach. These exercises seem to have had the general approbation of the bishops and clergy. So persuaded was the archbishop of their utility for the improvement of the ministers of the church, that he refused to execute the queen's order for their suppression ; and very faithfully admonished her of her tyrannical conduct, both in suppressing these exercises, and in discouraging preach-

ing. Grindál was suspended, first for six months; and refusing the submission required, the suspension continued till within a year of his death. His proffered resignation, however, was for a long time not accepted; and when it was intended to receive it, the measure was rendered unnecessary by the death of the archbishop<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> In the archbishop's remonstrance to the queen are these faithful admonitions: "Surely I cannot marvel enough how this strange opinion should once enter into your mind—that it should be good for the church to have few preachers. Alas, madam! is the Scripture more plain in any thing than that the Gospel of Christ should be plentifully preached?" &c. "If the Holy Ghost prescribeth especially that preachers should be placed in every town, how can it then well be thought that three or four preachers may suffice for a shire? Public and continual preaching of God's word is the ordinary means and instrument of the salvation of mankind." "I am very careful in allowing of such preachers only as be able both for knowledge in the Scriptures, and also for testimony of their godly life and conversation; and besides that, I have given very great charge to the rest of my brethren, the bishops of this province, to do the like. We admitted no man to the office of preaching, that either professeth papistry or puritanism: the graduates of the university only are admitted to be preachers, unless it be some few which have excellent gifts of knowledge in the Scriptures, joined with good utterance and godly persuasions. I myself procured about forty learned preachers and graduates within less than six years to be placed within the diocese of York, besides those I found there." "But indeed this age judgeth hardily and nothing indifferently of the abilities of preachers of our time; judging few or none to be able in their opinion, of which hard judgment groweth up divers ill dispositions of men. St. Paul doth command the preaching of Christ not with excellency of speech; but in our time many have so delicate ears, that no preaching can satisfy them unless it be sauced with much sweetness and exornation of speech, which the same apostle utterly condemneth; and giveth this reason, 'lest the cross of Christ be of no effect.' Some there be also that are mislikers of the godly reformation in religion now established: wishing, indeed, that there were no preachers at all, and so, by depraving of ministers, impugn religion." "But God forbid, madam, that you should open your ears to any of these wicked persuasions, or any way to diminish the preaching of Christ's Gospel, for that you would ruinate altogether at length." Respecting the homilies he says, "I continue in the same mind I was when I attended upon your majesty: the reading of homilies has its commodities, but it is nothing comparable to the office of preaching; the godly preacher is learned in the Gospel who can apply his speech to the diversity of times, places, and hearers, which cannot be done in homilies. Exhortations, reprehensions, and persuasions are uttered with more affection to the moving of the hearers in sermons than in homilies; besides, homilies were devised by godly bishops in your brother's days, only to supply necessity by want of preachers, and are by the statute not to be preferred, but to give place to sermons wheresoever they may be had, and were never thought in themselves to contain alone sufficient instruction for the church of England; for it was then found (as it is found now) that this church of England hath been by appropriations, and that not without sacrilege, spoiled of the livings which at the first were appointed to the office of preaching and teaching:

In the year 1583, Dr. Whitgift, who had been previously bishop of Worcester, and had distinguished himself by his writ-

which appropriations were first annexed to abbeys, and after came to the crown, and now are disposed to private men's possessions without hope to reduce the same to the original institution. So that at this day, in my opinion, where one church is able to yield sufficient living to a learned preacher, there are at least seven churches unable to do the same. Where there be a great number of souls (the more the pity) there are not seven pounds a year reserved for the minister." "Homilies have been devised that the people should not be altogether destitute of instruction."

"Now, for the second point, which is concerning the learned exercises and conferences amongst the ministers of the church, I have consulted with divers my brethren the bishops, who think of the same as I do—a thing profitable to the church, and therefore expedient to be continued; and I trust your majesty will think the like when your majesty shall have been informed of the matter and order thereof." "The authors of this exercise are the bishops of the diocese where the same is used, who, by the law of God, and by the canons and constitution of the church now in force, have authority to appoint exercises to their inferior ministers for increase of learning and knowledge in the Scriptures;"—"the time appointed for this exercise is once a month"—"the time of this exercise is two hours"—"some text of Scripture before appointed to be spoken, is interpreted in this order," &c. "Prayer and a psalm follow." He describes to the queen the office of the moderators appointed by the bishop, and the rule—"That no controversy of the present time or state shall be moved or dealt withal."

Howsoever, report had been made to her majesty concerning the exercises. He mentions the names of nine bishops of his province, who had testified to him by their letters, "that they had found by experience great profit to arise from these exercises." He instances "that where afore there were not three ministers able and meet to preach at Paul's Cross, now are thirty, and forty, or fifty besides, able to instruct their own cures." "I am enforced with all humility, and yet plainly, to profess that I cannot, with safe conscience, and without the offence of the majesty of God, give mine assent to the suppressing of the said exercises; much less can I send out any instruction for the utter and universal subversion of the same. I say with St. Paul, 'I have no power to destroy but only to edify.'—I can do nothing against the truth, but with the truth. If it be your majesty's pleasure for this or any other cause to remove me out of this place, I will with all humility yield thereunto." "Bear with me, I beseech you, madam, if I choose rather to offend your earthly majesty than to offend the heavenly majesty of God." He then begs her to consider these short petitions following: "The first, that you would refer all those ecclesiastical matters which touch religion or the doctrine or discipline of the church, unto the bishops and divines of the church of your realm, according to the example of all the Christian emperors and princes of all ages: for, indeed, they are to be judged, as an ancient father writeth, 'in a church or synod, and not in a palace.' When your majesty has questions of the laws of your realm, you do not decide the same in your court or palace, but send them to your judges to be determined: likewise for the duties in matters in doctrine or discipline of the church, the ordinary way is to refer the decision to the bishops and other head ministers of the church," &c. "The second petition I

ings against the Puritans, was appointed archbishop of Canterbury. It is, in a great measure, to this prelate that the church

have to make to your majesty is this, that when you deal in matters of faith and religion, or matters that touch the church of Christ, which is the spouse bought with so dear a price, you would not use to pronounce so resolutely and peremptorily—‘as of authority’—as you may do in civil and extern matters; but always remember that in God’s cause the will of God, and not the will of any earthly creature, is to take place: it is the anti-Christian voice of the pope, *Thus I will—thus I order—my will is reason sufficient.*” The archbishop concludes in a language of very awful admonition, such as princes are not accustomed to hear. “I see,” remarks Fuller, “that a lamb in his own, can be a lion in God and his church’s cause.”

The ill reception of this faithful remonstrance by the queen, is attributed by historians to the influence of the earl of Leicester, whom the archbishop had much offended by refusing to alienate from his see the palace of Lambeth in his favour.

The Prophesyings were suppressed by the queen’s own authority. We have a pious letter of Bentham, by this time bishop of Litchfield and Coventry, whom the reader will recollect as superintendant of the chief congregation of the English church in the days of queen Mary; it is addressed to his “very loving friend and brother in Christ, Thomas Lever, archdeacon of Coventry:” “Whereas the queen has been informed of some matters handled and abused in the exercise at Coventry, and thereupon has written to me a strait charge to inhibit the said exercise, these are therefore to will and require you, and nevertheless in her majesty’s name to charge you, to forbear and stay yourselves from that exercise till it shall please God we may, either by earnest prayer or humble petition, obtain the full use thereof with her good pleasure and full authority; and in the mean time so to use the heavenly and most comfortable gift of preaching, that you may seek and set forth Jesus Christ and his kingdom without contempt and controlment of the state and laws, under which we ought to live in unity and peace; which I beseech God grant unto you and me, and all that look for the coming of our Saviour Christ, to whose direction I commit you.” This was written about six months before the bishop’s death, and I think shews as well the holy principle upon which he submitted to the painful restriction, as the archbishop’s letter to the queen discovers the bolder resolution of attempting to make a stand for the liberties of the church: indeed it would have been a useless sacrifice for Bentham to resist the authority that had overpowered the archbishop. A jealousy of puritanism was what deprived the church of these useful exercises; and it must be admitted that the queen had just cause to be suspicious of its growth, as its object was at this time not merely to alter a few ceremonies, but to overturn the church establishment; the consequences of which to her authority she had a sufficient proof of before her eyes in the state of Scotland. She was told that deprived ministers frequented these exercises, and made them the instruments of their cause; and although express regulations were adopted by the bishops to prevent this, the suspicion could not be removed from the queen’s mind,—more anxious, it is to be feared, for her state policy than the welfare of the church. Some disposition was shewn in the convocation to resent the affront put upon the church by the indignity offered to the archbishop, but it was quashed as a mad attempt.—What could the convocation of the clergy do against a prerogative which trampled even upon the rights of parliament?



of England owes what she yet retains of the wreck of her vast property, and the preservation of the episcopal order. At the time of his accession, the more considerable of the queen's council, from different motives—some of them not the most honourable—were favourable to the demands of the Puritans; and it soon appeared, that a majority of the house of commons were disposed to pursue the same course. Some of the members were Puritans by principle, and proposals for further reformation, pointing out existing defects, and charging them on the present administrators of ecclesiastical affairs, could not but be a popular theme in that assembly. Whitgift was certainly a man of great firmness and ability, and seems to have long held an ascendancy over the mind of the queen, that was unusual with Elizabeth. He well understood—what some of the queen's counsellors at that time did not perceive—the tendency of the innovations proposed, and the final objects of the proposers. The church and university of Geneva, so much looked up to by the Puritan reformers, were at this time under the superintendence of Beza, the successor of Calvin; they were become much more peremptory and violent, in insisting that the establishment of the Presbyterian discipline, as “the spiritual monarchy of Christ,” by authority of the Word of God, should be set up in all churches.

The celebrated Andrew Melvil, a disciple of Beza, had already proceeded on his violent career in Scotland. The church of that kingdom, as left by the venerated Knox, though reformed more to the taste of the Puritans than the English church, had, notwithstanding, under its superintendents, something of an episcopal face. The ancient episcopacy also had been attempted to be restored; but in such a manner, and under persons appointed to the sacred office of so unsuitable a character, that, in truth, Scotland had no reason on this occasion, nor on a similar occasion in a subsequent age, to be in love with bishops. But from the instructions of Melvil, a parity of order among all the ministers of Christ, became generally received as a fundamental principle, on supposed Scriptural authority; and the church of Scotland was brought to a resolution to carry this plan of government into execution, whether the civil powers would consent or not. Episcopacy was pronounced to be anti-christian; toleration was not thought of; and the measures pursued against the Scottish prelates, were marked with all the bigotry of the times.

These proceedings had, no doubt, a very great influence on the Presbyterians and Puritans in England. The dispute was

not now about a few ceremonies or external regulations ; far less was it about the toleration of a conscientious dissent from the established church ; but, whether the episcopal government and supremacy of the crown were to give place to “ the platform of discipline.” The leaders of the nonconformists would listen to nothing short of this ; they avowed it, in their opinion, “ to be the cause of God, for which they were ready to sacrifice a thousand lives.” They scrupled not to declare, “ that they would not wait for the consent of any power on earth ;” and actually began to set up their discipline in many parts of England, under their regular classes, synods, and assemblies ; and the issue must have been a revolution in the existing government, probably both of church and state.

When Whitgift was raised to the metropolitan dignity, and in fact invested with all the power lodged in the crown by the Act of Supremacy, he had but to determine either to see the present institution of the church overthrown, or to exclude the upholders of Presbyterianism from exercising their ministry. The measures of severity which the archbishop, at the head of the High Commission and in the Star Chamber, had recourse to, in order to enforce uniformity, and to discover the disaffected, has been justly blamed by posterity ; and the whole of this kind of jurisdiction, with all the processes of the courts which exercised it, has long since been swept away, as inconsistent with the spirit of the British constitution. But it were unfair to judge of Whitgift, or of any of his contemporaries, by our wiser rules of justice. There are, it may be, in courts where upright judges *now* preside, processes still retained, which will be adjudged by posterity to have been most unreasonable, vexatious, and ruinous. The archbishop’s own view of his conduct was, that he had done nothing “ unlawful, unusual, or uncharitable<sup>1</sup> ;” nor can it be shewn from the history of the then suppressed party, that they would have been more lenient in the exercise of authority, had they possessed it. The measure most reprobated by posterity — the examination of witnesses by an *ex officio* oath — was shewn to be a measure pursued by Calvin himself, in his consistory at Geneva, in order to enforce his discipline<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Strype’s Life of Whitgift.

<sup>2</sup> “ It must be owned that the determined character of the archbishop — and, it may be, the comprehensive views and thorough knowledge of the opposite party on which he acted — has given to his conduct the appearance of proceeding from a resolution to support all the defects and abuses of the system which he defends. The same censure has often been passed on politicians of more enlightened times,

The number of deprived clergy, in consequence of the more strict conformity enforced by archbishop Whitgift, does not appear considerable. In the province of Canterbury, there appeared, of non-conformists, two doctors of divinity, two bachelors, twenty-two masters of arts, and thirteen bachelors, with ten under-graduates; in all forty-nine<sup>1</sup>. But these were, probably, many of them men of popular abilities. They are described as welcomed into the families of the gentry, in the capacity of tutors and private chaplains; and their instructions are considered as having produced no small effect on the next generation, in the disastrous days of Charles I.

Severe as Whitgift is represented, he does not appear to have been inexorable. Mr. Cartwright enjoyed a comfortable situation by his connivance, at Warwick, and had his license to preach, upon his promise "not to meddle with controversies," which promise he carefully observed; and it is said, he seriously lamented on his death-bed, the unnecessary troubles he had caused in the church, by the schism of which he had been the great fomentor<sup>2</sup>.

This may serve as one instance to shew how much more efficient are kindness and forbearance, than all the harsh measures of authority and power, in promoting unity of opinions among mankind.

when they themselves have made it evident, that they were as anxious to remove these abuses, and to remedy these defects, as their most zealous opponents; but they do not perhaps behold them in the same exaggerated view, or attribute them to the same causes, or approve either of the remedies proposed or of the real objects of those who propose them. The outcry of the times on which we are treating, was against the insufficiency of a number of the clergy, non-residence, and pluralities: the archbishop resisted the inference to be drawn from the first complaint, that therefore the barriers of the church were to be thrown open that a considerable number of able and popular preachers should be admitted, who were avowedly hostile to her existing institutions, and were determined to overthrow them. The insufficiency of some of the clergy he lamented, and shewed its causes—the want of principle in some patrons of livings, the limited power of the bishops, and especially that sacrilegious spoliation of church property, which had not left an adequate provision for a respectable clergyman in many large and populous parishes. But he could assert a gradual melioration of the clergy; non-residence, he shewed, as separate from pluralities, hardly existed; and these—which have been justly considered as the greatest abuse in our ecclesiastical polity—he defended as necessary to be tolerated in the then state of the church, for the encouragement of a more learned ministry, on the increase of which the future prosperity of the church depended; he did not deny that every cure with a sufficient provision, ought, if possible, and if compatible with greater objects, to be supplied with a proper resident incumbent."

<sup>1</sup> Strype's Life of Whitgift, Appendix, book iii. note. vii.    <sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 554.

The church of England had also found a better support of her constitution, in the writings of Mr. Richard Hooker, master of the Temple, a man of great meekness, piety, and learning, who has acquired among posterity the epithet of “Judicious.” He wrote an elaborate work on Ecclesiastical Polity, still esteemed a standard book in the English church, and considered as classical in British literature.

It is to be carefully remembered, that during all this period, there was no dispute between the church and the Puritan divines, on any point of doctrine; both parties were what now are called doctrinal Calvinists. Had they been divided, like the divines of the reformed church on the Continent at this period, into supralapsarians, sublapsarians, and universalist Calvinists, with respect to the doctrines of grace and election, it is impossible to deny that the divines of the English church were decidedly Calvinistic.

What gives us a clearer view of the religious sentiments of these times, and shews the full agreement of the rulers of the church with the Puritans in doctrine, at the same time that it marks the beginning of a departure from the doctrines of the reformation, which hitherto all had held in common, is, “the predestinarian controversy,” which sprang up at Cambridge, and the part which the heads of the church took in the affair.

This controversy was occasioned by the advancing of certain erroneous doctrines, by Mr. Barret, a member of that university, in a sermon preached in St. Mary’s Church, for which he was convened before the vice-chancellor, Dr. Whitaker, and the heads of houses, and compelled to read his retractation in the same place<sup>1</sup>. The offensive points which he had maintained, and the retractation appointed by the university, may be learned from the paper he was directed to read, and which may be found below<sup>2</sup>. From this it will sufficiently appear what were esteemed, at that time, true or false doctrines in the university of Cam-

<sup>1</sup> A. D. 1595.

<sup>2</sup> “ 1. First I said, that no one in this frail world is upholden with such firmness or certainty of faith, *i. e.* unless (as I afterwards explained) by revelation, that he ought to be secure concerning his salvation: but now before God I profess, and in my conscience acknowledge, that those who are justified by faith have peace towards God, *i. e.* reconciliation with God, and by faith stand in that grace; therefore they ought, by the certainty of that faith, to be certain and secure of their salvation.

“ 2. I asserted that the faith of Peter could not fail, but that of others

bridge. The heads of houses declare, "they never heard the like preached there," — referring to Barret's doctrine, — "or

might; for, for the faith of each individual believer (as I then said) the Lord did not pray: but now, with a better and sounder judgment, instructed by the words which Christ speaketh (John, xvii. 10), I acknowledge that Christ prayed for the faith of every [believer]; and that by virtue of this prayer of Christ, every one truly believing is so upholden, that his faith cannot fail.

" 3. As to final perseverance, I said, that this was a proud security respecting a future event, in its very nature contingent; nor did I only affirm it to be proud, but also impious: — but now I ingenuously confess, that true and justifying faith, by which believers are most closely united unto Christ, is so fixed, and concerning the future so certain, that it never can, by any temptations of the flesh, of the world, or of the devil himself, be rooted out of the minds of the faithful; so that he who once has, will ever have this [faith]; for the benefit of this justifying faith [is], that Christ dwelleth in us and we in him, so that it cannot but increase, (Christ daily increasing in us,) and endure even to the end, because God bestoweth constancy.

" 4. I affirmed that there was no distinction in faith, but in the believers; concerning which I confess that I erred. I now freely acknowledge, that a temporary faith, (which is therefore false, because it is temporary, as Bernard witnesses,) is not by its measure and degrees, but in itself distinct and different from that saving faith by which sinners, apprehending Christ, are justified before God for ever. Moreover, I add, that James makes mention of a dead faith, and Paul of that which worketh by love.

" 5. I subjoined, that remission of sins was an article of faith, but not specially of this or that man; *i. e.* (as I then explained), that no one, though he truly believes, can or ought to believe for certain that his sins are remitted to him; — but now I think otherwise, and ingenuously confess, that every one possessed of true faith, in this article of the faith — 'I believe in the remission of sins,' maintains, that he for certain does believe that his particular sins are gratuitously remitted to him. It does not, however, follow, that the petition in the Lord's Prayer — 'Forgive us our sins' — is superfluous; for in that petition we supplicate as well the gift of faith as its increase.

" 6. These words fell from me in my sermon — 'That with respect to them who are not saved, I firmly believe and ingenuously confess that I do so believe in opposition to Calvin, Peter Martyr, and others, that sin is the true, proper, and prime cause of reprobation:' — but now being better instructed, I say that the reprobation of the wicked is from eternity; and that saying of Augustin to Simplician is most true, *viz.* 'If sin were the cause of reprobation, he could then have elected no one, since God foresaw that all were contaminated by it;' and (to deal ingenuously) I do not otherwise think or believe concerning the doctrine of election and reprobation than the church of England believes and teaches in the book concerning the Articles of Faith." — [He then is made to read the seventeenth Article.]

" *Lastly*, I rashly uttered these words against John Calvin, a man who has most highly merited of the church of Christ: 'That he dared too much to lift up himself against the Most High and Almighty Son of the Most High and Almighty

elsewhere, since the beginning of her majesty's most gracious reign." They describe Barret's sermon to the archbishop, to whom an appeal had been made, as "offensive to the church," "strongly savouring of the leaven of popery, and contrary to the doctrine of the nature, quality, and condition of faith set forth in the articles of religion and homilies appointed to be read in churches, and that had been taught ever since her majesty's reign, in sermons, and defended in the public schools, and upon commencements without contradictions in the universities."

The archbishop evidently viewed the conduct of the university, at first, with considerable displeasure; he thought they had infringed upon the rights of his jurisdiction, in taking upon them to pronounce what doctrines were, and what were not, consonant to the doctrines of the church of England, and to command a retractation.

It now became a question between the archbishop and the university. The former insisted that his jurisdiction had been abridged, not only as being proper visiter in the vacation of the bishopric of Ely, but being also the chief of the ecclesiastical commission, from which there was no exemption: the latter stood peremptorily upon their privileges, to judge and determine differences about true and false doctrines, in such as were of their body. This encouraged Barret publicly to revoke his retractation; and, at the same time, Dr. Baro, a Frenchman, at that period Lady Margaret's professor, maintained the same sentiments, and afterwards others still more tending to semi-Pelagianism. The affair of Barret produced a very warm correspondence between the heads of the university and the archbishop. The university, however, after appealing to their high chancellor, Cecil, to no purpose, were compelled to yield to the archbishop, and presented to him their humble suit and desire for the interference of his authority, "that the opinions newly broached among them within these two years, being matter and

God; by which words I confess myself to have done great injury to a man most learned and truly pious. And I most humbly pray that you would all pardon this my rashness; and also because I then uttered some expressions with great asperity against Peter Martyr, Theodore Beza, Jerome, Zanchius, Francis Junius, and others of the same religious sentiments, luminaries and ornaments of our church, calling them in reproach Calvinists, and with other ignominious terms branding them with infamy; whom, inasmuch as our church does deservedly reverence, it was not just that I should defame, or in any way diminish the estimation in which they are holden, or deter any who belong to us from reading their most learned writings," &c. &c.



subject of dissension, be controlled and silenced; and not that the doctrine, which has thus long with general approbation and great comfort been preached, be now disgraced." "Mr. Barret," they say, "in his sermon, delivered many and manifest untruths boldly, earnestly, and as it were, triumphantly, and in a manner of challenge; contrary to the doctrine of our church set down in the Book of Articles, in the Apology of the church of England, and in the defence of the same, in the Catechisms commanded by authority to be used, and in the Book of Common Prayer." They desire "that he may be brought to a retraction of his errors, in such sort as we may have framed now, or else some other as shall please your Grace better." A new retraction was accordingly drawn up by mutual agreement between the archbishop and the heads of the university, which Barret was compelled to make<sup>1</sup>.

These same doctrines, however, became, about the same time, the subject of much dispute in the nation at large. Cambridge was by no means quiet. This led to a deputation from the university to the archbishop, consisting of Dr. Whitaker and Dr. Tyndal, to confer with his grace and other learned men for the establishment of these points, to be acquiesced in by that university; and this, at length, was done and finished at Lambeth, in nine propositions, which are commonly called the "Lambeth Articles." They are entitled "Articles approved of by the most reverend lords, John, archbishop of Canterbury, and Richard

<sup>1</sup> "Reverend fathers and dear brethren,—In my sermon *ad Clerum* preached some time since before you, I asserted some things which gave much offence to the ears and minds of many, and that deservedly: for I said confidently, and stiffly maintained, 1st, That a temporary and unfruitful faith is all one with a true and saving faith; and that there is no difference or distinction in faith: 2dly, That it is given to none certainly to know, by a certainty of faith, that he is elected: 3dly, That none can in this frail world be certain of his salvation by a certainty of faith: 4thly, That remission of sins is an article of faith, but not special of this or that person: 5thly, That Peter's faith only could not fail: 6thly, That Christ prayed for Peter's faith only that it should not fail: 7thly, That David knew not that he could not fall away: 8thly, That the gift of perseverance is a future contingent.—Being now overcome by truth, and according to the appointment and command of my superiors, I do freely, openly, and ingenuously, and from my heart revoke, condemn, and detest these assertions, as being contrary to the Sacred Scriptures, and the orthodox faith lawfully approved in the church of England; and I do solemnly promise that hereafter I will never profess them nor defend them; nor think otherwise of religion than now the church of England thinketh, which I do believe to be the true church of Christ. And I am sorry I spoke so reproachfully of those chief men, Martyr, Calvin, Beza, Zanchy, who, I confess, have deserved excellently well of the church of Christ."

Bancroft, bishop of London, and other theologians, at Lambeth, November, 20, 1595<sup>1</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> "1. God has from eternity predestinated some to life, and reprobated some unto death.

"2. The moving or efficient cause of predestination unto life is not the foresight of faith, or of perseverance, or of good works, or of any thing which may be in the person predestinated; but solely in the will and good pleasure of God.

"3. The number of the predestinated is definite and certain, and can neither be increased nor diminished.

"4. Those who are not predestinated to salvation will necessarily, on account of their sins, be damned.

"5. True, living, justifying faith, and the sanctifying Spirit of God, are not extinguished, nor fall, nor become evanescent in the elect, either finally or totally.

"6. A man truly faithful, that is, endowed with justifying faith, is certain, with a full assurance of faith, concerning the remission of his sins, and of his eternal salvation by Christ.

"7. Saving faith is neither bestowed upon, nor communicated, nor conceded to all men, by which they may be saved if they will.

"8. No one can come to Christ, unless it shall have been given to him, and unless the Father shall have drawn him; and all men are not drawn by the Father that they may come to the Son.

"9. It is not placed in the will and power of every man to be saved."

These articles were sent by the archbishop to Dr. Matthew Hutton, archbishop of York, for his approbation. His judgment was as follows: To the first article he subscribed, "Most true." To the second he underwrote, "Not less true." To the third, "They are the words of Augustin (chap. 13, *de Corrept. et Gra.*)."

To the fourth, "Most certain, and yet if the word *necessarily* be erased, it will less offend the infirm. Read Augustin, cap. 22. *de Bono Perseverantiae*, how it should be spoken concerning the reprobate." To the fifth, "Not less true." To the sixth, (Augustin, cap. 8, *de Bono Perseverantiae*), "The reprobate, indeed, though called, justified, and renewed by the laver of regeneration, yet nevertheless perish, because they were not called according to purpose. It is good therefore to add, 'called according to purpose.'" To the seventh, "It were less offensive if the words, 'If they will,' be erased: see Augustin *de Bono Perseverantiae*, cap. 22." To the eighth, "This proposition seems to be the same with the former." To the ninth, "Only the Pelagians and the Semi-Pelagians deny this." He then subscribed his name after these words: "These theses may be openly collected from the Sacred Writings, or may by necessary consequences be deduced; and from the writings of Augustin."

It appears, from what Dr. Hutton wrote under the sixth article, that he held with those divines who, after Augustin, maintained that there might be a true justifying faith possessed by those who were not ordained to eternal life, and who therefore endured not to the end, but became apostates. They grounded their opinion, among other Scriptures, on Heb. vi. 4, &c. This opinion was strongly opposed by the main body of the reformers, as contrary to the doctrine of the true nature of faith, of the union of the soul with Christ, and of the doctrine of the gift of the Spirit as an earnest of the heavenly inheritance, and as destroying the certainty of faith. It was considered as that particular point in which the

The passing of the Lambeth Articles was far from stifling the rising contention. The archbishop was aware that "the court would boil at the doctrine of predestination<sup>1</sup>." The queen, he said, admitted "that the Articles were all true;" but she "feared their effect upon weak minds, and disapproved of their being set forth as theses to be disputed in the universities," which had been represented to her as the object of their publication. "But she was highly enraged with Baro for calling the doctrines in question." These Articles serve to shew what had hitherto been the belief of our reformers; but the occasion of their being drawn up marks, perhaps, the beginning of that departure from the doctrines of the reformation, which a few years afterwards became more manifest<sup>2</sup>.

reformers of the sixteenth century had recovered the true faith of the Scriptures, beyond what Augustin had been given to see. It arose from this error also, as they supposed, that the system of Augustin was found compatible with the popish doctrine of merit, or salvation by "inherent righteousness." For if being justified by faith, and being sealed by the Holy Spirit, did not render final perseverance certain, nothing else could; and, however assisted, the believer's only trust must be placed in his future perseverance. He could not argue the certainty of his perseverance from his knowledge of his gratuitous election; but must infer it from his actually enduring to the end.

Thus, "the certainty of faith," and not "the doctrine of predestination" alone, was characteristic of the reformation from popery.

<sup>1</sup> "The queen's court," according to the account already quoted from Mr. Strype, was "a harbour for epicures and atheists; and a kind of lawless place, because it stood in no parish." We are not surprised that a society of this description should "BOIL" at the doctrine of predestination — a doctrine which, except to persons entirely prostrate at the cross of Christ, has ever seemed "hard to be uttered," and apt to create offence — a doctrine, too, which, beyond all others, calls for present decision of character; and seems to blast that hope, in which so many, who indulge in sin and neglect religion, flatter themselves — that they will some day do better, and turn to faith and calling upon God.

<sup>2</sup> There was, however, another controversy, which had afterwards a very important influence on the esteem in which the divines on the two parts were respectively held by the most religious of the people; — this was respecting the moral obligation of the Sabbath. On this point some of the bishops of the queen's days did not determine so wisely; they were disposed to deny the moral obligation, and to enforce the observation of the Lord's day on the ground of ecclesiastical institution, like the other festivals of the church: or, to take archbishop Hutton's statement, "In the *moral* law of the Sabbath there was something ceremonial: *moral* — that some day or time should be allotted to God's service; but precisely the seventh day and not the eighth day, that was ceremonial, and is abrogated."

The Puritan divines, on the other hand, were remarkable for their zeal in maintaining the moral obligation of the Sabbath; and its strict observance, even to an excessive degree of severity in some cases, became characteristic of it

On the death of Elizabeth, in 1603, and the succession of king James of Scotland, the old archbishop and the clergy

party. But the treatises which the more able and moderate of them wrote concerning the observance of the holy day, are said to have had a great influence with the people at large, and led generally to a more sacred regard to that holy day; whereas, the determinations of the ruling clergy, while they encouraged some in the profanation of the day, who were wont openly to indulge in sports and pastimes in the intervals of divine worship, brought an imputation of impiety, among the more religiously disposed, upon themselves.

The meaning of the article in the Creed, "He descended into hell," was frequently debated during this reign. Some were for omitting the article altogether: but the greater part, with Calvin, understood it of the sufferings of the Redeemer's soul; and the Puritans, in general, applied it to the mental sufferings of our Lord in his passion; the divines of the church to a local descent of the departed spirit to a place of punishment; but the arguments of Mr. Broughton, a learned biblical scholar of those days, shewed that the term in the original Scriptures rendered *hell*, was not to be understood of the place of punishment exclusively, but of the state of departed souls in general, including Paradise, the resting place of the spirits of the just, as well as Gehenna, the place of punishment. Archbishop Whitgift and the rest, towards the end of this reign, adopted this sense of the term — it may be, too exclusively, — and generally explained the article of the departure of the separate spirit of the Redeemer, to Paradise.

We read also in the reign of Elizabeth, of a sort of "pure brethren," or Libertines, as others called them, who reckoned themselves absolutely free from the whole law of Moses, and consequently from any obligation to the moral law. Whitgift's decision on this point was: "We have nothing to do with Moses' ceremonial and judicial laws; whereof the one was given for a certain time, the other for a certain nation: but touching the moral law, which is the perfection of the law of nature, and afterwards was written in tables of stone, being the rule of God's justice, that remaineth for ever. Secondly, we are indeed free, but not from the obedience of the law, but from the curse of the law; and therefore rather *free* to serve God and love our neighbour." He prayed the person to whom he writes, "if he met with any of these pure and spiritual brethren, to ask them this question, 'Whether we ought to love God with all our hearts, and our neighbours as ourselves?' then go forward with them: 'If this be our duty, why is it not lawful for us to know how we should perform the same?'"

A dean of Lincoln, too, we find, was called in question for having expressed in a sermon that "Christ was the greatest sinner in the world." The dean explained his meaning to the archbishop's satisfaction; but he strongly expressed the disapprobation of himself and his brethren in the commission, against such manner of speeches of the person of Christ, as might give occasion to any to think so basely and so wickedly of that immaculate Lamb of God. He writes on the occasion: "And because you shall not doubt of my opinion in this matter, I would have you to understand that I think Luther, in saying that 'Christ was the greatest robber, murderer, adulterer, thief, &c. of all men,' and whosoever followeth him therein, or any other, in writing or speaking so intemperately or unadvisedly, do write and speak contrary to the phrase of Scripture, and to the truth, and indeed blasphemously; for although the Scripture teaches that Christ was *reputed* such a one, yet to say simply that he was so, or that he had sin or

were greatly alarmed for the present establishment, knowing that James had been educated among the Presbyterians, and had publicly declared that he thought “ the kirk of Scotland the purest church on earth ;” — “ purer than Geneva, because they kept Easter and Christmas ;” and “ that the service of the church of England was but an ill-said mass,” in comparison of their pure worship. But Whitgift, by his messengers, was soon satisfied of James’s intentions towards the church of England. He had, indeed, received in Scotland too many affronts to his royal dignity, from the high churchmen there, to be much in love with the presbyterian discipline.

A monarch of James’s character could not but alter his opinion, when he saw the order and subordination of the English church ; if indeed he had ever been sincere in his praises of the kirk, which may well be doubted, and in his constancy to his religious principles altogether. In his first speech from the throne he gave offence, and created alarm to Protestants of all denominations, by talking of his willingness “ to meet half way his mother church of Rome, so that she

committed sin, or can properly and simply be called a sinner, no Christian man will dare to affirm or justify\*.”

As we have before noted, the advocates both for the presbyterian and the episcopal form of church government began, towards the end of the reign of Elizabeth, to maintain an apostolical, and therefore a Divine right, for the mode of government they defended. Archbishop Hutton thus briefly states the controversy on both sides : “ Our presbyteries do derive their authority from the apostles’ time ; priests and bishops, they say, were all one, as Jerome saith to Evagrius, and upon the epistle to Titus — ‘ And they governed the church by their common counsel ;’ but afterwards, for avoiding of schism, it was decreed, in all the world, that one of the number of the priests should be elected to be over the rest, and to have the general care over the priests ; but more from custom than from the truth of the Lord’s disposition.” — “ But indeed,” says Dr. Hutton, stating the opinions of episcopalians, “ bishops have their authority not by any custom or decree of man, but from the apostles themselves, as Epiphanius proveth plainly against Arius the heretic ; who, being a proud man, because he could not get to be a bishop himself, thought that a bishop and a presbyter was the same : with this opinion Augustin doth charge that heretic,” &c. “ But Epiphanius doth shew the difference to be, not only because the bishop hath authority over the priests, but because the presbyter begetteth children to the church in preaching and baptising ; the bishop begetteth fathers to the church by the giving of orders : ‘ For this purpose I left thee in Crete, that thou mightest set in order the things which are wanting, and ordain presbyters in every city.’ And so it has continued in the church ever since,” &c.

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\* Strype’s Life of Whitgift.

would but lay aside her doctrine of the deposition of princes excommunicated by the pope<sup>1</sup>."

Archbishop Whitgift, now in his sixty-third year, was evidently not satisfied with the king he had gained. He seems to have become better acquainted with the temper of the people, and discovered great apprehensions of what might be done against the church in the approaching parliament. His wish that he might not live to see it was gratified, having died in February 1603. It is reported that he said on his death bed, "Now, O Lord, my soul is lifted up, that I die in a time wherein I had rather give up to God an account of my bishopric, than any longer to exercise it among men." His last audible words were, "Pro ecclesia Dei."

James had lost the opportunity he might have enjoyed, of reconciling the great body of the more moderate Puritans to the government of the church, by a few concessions or connivances to those of scrupulous consciences. A petition was presented

<sup>1</sup> It has been said by some authors, that the bishops beat the more modest Puritans in their flattery of the royal wisdom; and the bad pre-eminence must, perhaps, be conceded to the bishops, when one exclaimed, at the conference to be described hereafter, "Undoubtedly your majesty speaks by the special assistance of God's Spirit;" — and another, "I protest, my heart melteth for joy that Almighty God of his singular mercy has given us such a king as since Christ's time has not been." But the Puritans did not come far short: "Referring ourselves to your majesty's pleasure for your gracious answer as God shall direct you \*," — they say, they "cast themselves down in the true affection of their hearts before his royal presence, whom they acknowledged to be the noblest pillar of the Gospel, and the greatest hope for the propagation and establishing thereof that was in all Christendom †." But the twelve judges were guilty of something worse than flattery, when they explained the law so as to make the king absolute in all ecclesiastical affairs, without limitation or redress; and determined the whole body of the clergy to be excluded the benefit of the common and statute law, for that the king might make what constitutions he pleased; that his majesty's high commissioners might proceed upon these constitutions *ex officio*; and the subject may not open his complaints to the king, or petition for relief without being finable at pleasure, and coming within danger of treason and felony.

All these flatteries and concessions were enough to have turned the head of a wiser prince than James; and, at a period when the commons of England were fast rising in importance, in wealth, and in knowledge, so as to require a different mode of government, could not but have a bad effect, and must be reckoned among those things which tended to harden the princes of the house of Stuart to their destruction.

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\* Millenary Petition.

† Henry Jacob. See Life of Whitgift.



to him by nearly a thousand ministers, who describe themselves — “neither as factious men affecting a popular parity in the church, nor as schismatics aiming at the dissolution of the state ecclesiastical;” “that divers of them *had* subscribed; some upon protestation, some upon exposition given, some with condition, rather than the church should have been deprived of their labours and ministry.” To have kept as many of these from uniting with the avowed separatists, as could have been done consistently with truth and propriety, would surely have been the soundest policy; but it did not appear in that light to the king and his counsellors. A conference was indeed appointed at Hampton Court; but it was not conducted in a manner that could tend to reconcile the parties, or have the appearance of being intended to satisfy the complainants<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> The king named the divines of each party, and with foolish arrogance played the part of a disputant among them. The bishops and delegates of the clergy had first to satisfy him in some objections he brought against certain things in the establishment; with them he is said “to have played the Puritan,” but certainly not with the usual pertinacity of that sect.

1. “With respect to Confirmation, his majesty abhorred the abuse of raising this usage into a sacrament, and attributing its giving any force to baptism.” It was answered, that it was untrue that the church of England held baptism to be imperfect without confirmation; and the rubric was appealed to. In the defence of the rite was urged “the practice of the primitive church, the testimony of the fathers, and that it was moreover an apostolical institution, and part of the *Catechism* expressly mentioned in the New Testament (Heb. vi. 2.): that Calvin expounded the passage in this sense, and earnestly wished the custom might be revived in those reformed churches which had suppressed it.”

2. With respect to Absolution, his majesty had been informed that this usage in the church of England had some resemblance with the pope’s pardon. The king was satisfied by having the absolutions in the Prayer Book shewn to him; and was told that not only the Confessions of Augsburg, Bohemia, and Saxony, retained it, but that Calvin approved such a general confession and absolution as is used in the church of England.

3. His majesty expressed himself with some warmth about women and laics administering, as they did in cases of necessity, the sacrament of baptism. The bishops seemed to deny it as *positively* allowed in the church; they confessed an ambiguity in the Office on this point; and Mr. Neale has adduced the oath taken by midwives as a proof; but that does not so much enjoin the practice, as prohibit superstitious usages when they did baptise in cases of necessity. The king thought the laity ought not to presume to baptise, and yet he disapproved of all re-baptisation.

4. The king’s objections to the excommunications in the ecclesiastical courts for small offences the bishops admitted.

In the second day’s conference, when the Puritans presented their petition, Dr. Reynolds, a learned professor of Oxford, who was one that appeared on their behalf, began with a request that the Articles might be explained in some obscure

In the parliament nothing was enacted against what the bishops regarded as their interest, except that a statute of Ed-

passages and enlarged in others; especially, in Article XVI. it is said, "After we have received the Holy Ghost we may depart from grace:" he desired that this expression might be explained to an evident consistency with Article XVII.; and that this, or a resembling addition, might be inserted — "yet neither totally or finally." He also asked that the Lambeth Articles might be thrown into the book.

This throws light upon the history of the times. It appears that some of the clergy, who began to swerve from the doctrines of the reformation, made use of an argument grounded on Article XVI. That Article was drawn up against an error of the Anabaptists, very different from the doctrine of "the perpetuity of faith," as held by the reformers: if applied to that, the consistency would not indeed be *evident* between that and Article XVII. It appears it was so done, as it has been since, though Article XVI. declares its own meaning — "They are to be condemned who say they can no longer sin," &c.

The bishop of London, Bancroft, after a very indecent interruption of the doctor, for which he was rebuked by the king, was permitted to make his reply in this place. He said that many people grew libertines by relying too much upon predestination: this proposition, "If I shall be saved, I shall be saved," he called a desperate doctrine; that it was a contradiction to orthodox belief; that in points of predestination we should infer rather '*ascendendo*' than '*descendendo*,' that is, "we should conclude our election from the regularity of our lives, rather than rest our happiness upon any absolute irrespective decrees," &c. From hence he went on to acquaint his majesty with the doctrine of the church of England respecting predestination, citing the last clause of Article XVII.\* That part of the Article the king approved; and after discoursing upon the text of St. Paul — "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," he left it to be considered, whether it was proper to throw in a supplemental expression for satisfying the doctor's scruple, by putting in the word *often*. Upon the whole, his majesty wished "the doctrine of predestination to be handled with great caution and reserve: that unless the matter was discreetly managed, one of these two bad consequences would follow — either the omnipotency of God might be questioned, by *impeaching the doctrine of his eternal predestination*; or a desperate presumption encouraged, by inferring the necessary certainty of standing and persisting in grace."

The strict Calvinists would not, on the whole, have objected to what was said by the king and the bishop, but from the style of their discourse would have entertained some apprehensions whether they answered the description of those persons in Article XVII., to whom the doctrine of predestination and of our election in Christ is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort, "as well because it doth greatly establish and confirm their faith of eternal salvation to be enjoyed through Christ, as because it doth fervently kindle their love towards God."

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\* This last clause of Article XVII., so often urged as abating the meaning of the Article, turns out to be a quotation from Calvin himself.

ward VI. was revived, which appointed the ecclesiastical courts to proceed in the king's name, and not in that of the bishops, —

The king, it is supposed, afterwards found a doctrine more suitable to his judgment, though for some time after—if he ever actually acknowledged a change in his opinions — he was an avowed Calvinist in doctrine. The bishop of London had concurred in the Lambeth Articles; but it is far from being improbable that he had seen these doctrines wrested by unlearned and unstable men, as all other doctrines may be, to their own destruction: but we have no evidence that Bancroft ever altered his opinions respecting their truth, even in that form to which he had subscribed.

With respect to adding these Articles to the Thirty-nine, the king, when he learned their nature and occasion, said, “that when such questions happened among scholars, the best method was to determine them in the universities, and not *stuff* the Articles with theological conclusions,” &c. Reynolds moved for a new catechism, “that in the Prayer Book being too short, Nowell's too long,” — “for the better observation of the Sabbath, and especially for a new translation of the Bible,” — all which were agreed to. The advocate of the Puritans also desired his majesty that seditious books might be suppressed, or at least the reading of them restrained and permitted only to a few: he had an eye to popish publications. He desired “that every parish might be supplied with a learned minister;” and all agreed it was desirable, when it could be accomplished. “The want of maintenance, the choice of lay-patrons, and the compulsive law on the bishop to institute,” were mentioned as impediments.

On this occasion it was thrown out by Bancroft, “that preaching had such an ascendant in the fancy of some, that the celebration of Divine service was scandalously neglected: — it was come to that pass that they conceived the duty of a parish priest confined to the pulpit.” The king took notice of “the hypocrisy of the times, who lodged all their religion in their ears; that laziness led the people to this mistake, and that hearing being the easier part, they were not willing to undergo the labour and preparations required in devotion.” Something too was said of “turning pulpits into batteries, and of every malcontent being allowed to play his spleen upon his superiors from thence:” — certainly the greatest blemish with which history has branded the old Puritan character, and which nursed the rising generation to faction and rebellion. On the objections against the rubric, the king acknowledged, “that he disliked of reading all the Apocrypha in the church, or any chapter containing erroneous doctrine.” Much was said respecting “the cross in baptism:” the king exclaimed, on hearing what was urged in its defence, “It was come to that pass that we must charge Constantine with superstition and popery? If it was used so early, I see no reason why it may not be continued.” Respecting the surplice, it was contended by the Puritans that “it was a habit worn by the priests of Isis.” This objection, the king said, was “something new; because 'twas usually called ‘a rag of popery:’ but granting the supposition, there was no danger of reviving paganism.” Respecting those words in the Office of Matrimony, “With my body I thee worship,” the king said “he had been made to believe this phrase imported no less than Divine worship; but upon inquiry he found the words sink to a much lower and inoffensive sense — ‘a gentleman of worship’ being a customary expression with the English.” On the subject of the supremacy, which the moderate Puritans seemed now willing to admit in a larger sense than formerly, the king very

a regulation which did not long continue in practice. On the other hand, a bill was passed, disabling the crown from receiving any conveyance of church lands : thus a stop was put to the sacrilegious spoiling of ecclesiastical property, which had been practised all the queen's days. The legality of the marriage of the clergy was also more clearly established. In the convocation, a set of canons were formed, most of which are still in use ; but they have been declared not to be binding, at least upon the laity, as they want the authority of the parliament.

Bancroft was translated from the see of London to that of Canterbury. This prelate has been charged with attempting to set the royal prerogative above law. In the execution of the laws of uniformity, he proceeded with a rigour and a severity hitherto unknown. In the late archbishop's time, though a severe exercise of authority is considered as his great blemish, " yet things were not so extremely urged, but that many learned preachers — puritanically inclined — enjoyed their liberty conditionally, that they did not by word or deed openly disturb the state established<sup>1</sup> : but now, subscription, except to those who fully approved in their judgment the terms of communion, was rendered impossible to a conscientious clergyman, and many were obliged to throw up their preferments." The numbers, however, of the London beneficed clergy, who declined further subscription, were so great, that the court was alarmed, and the bishops were compelled to connive for the present.

The Puritans of the separation were harassed by Bancroft, and the high commissioners, with the greatest rigour and cruelty, and visibly grew worse under such management. Indeed, the truth of the proverb sometimes quoted in their books, as an apology for their conduct, — " Oppression maketh a wise man mad," —

plainly discovered the feelings by which he was actuated : " My lords the bishops," said he, " I may thank you that these men plead thus strongly for my supremacy : they think that they can't make their party good against you but by appealing to the *regale*, as if you or some of your friends were disaffected to it : but if once you are out and they in place, I know what would become of my supremacy : for no bishop, no king!" He observed, " that Knox in Scotland had at first urged the supremacy, when by it they would suppress the Romish bishops : but when they were in the seat, they pretended new degrees of illumination, and reformed at discretion." " His mother's supremacy," he remarked, " was not considerable enough to procure a private chapel for herself and a few of her family to serve God in the way of her education." It was in this connexion he betrayed himself by the expressions, " If this be all they have to say, I'll make them conform, or I'll harry them out of this land, or I'll do worse."

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Rudd's Speech.

was, perhaps, sometimes realised. When they would have transported themselves into the American settlements, for the sake of enjoying there the free exercise of their religious discipline, Bancroft procured a proclamation from the king, to prevent their leaving the country ; — a measure which has justly been regarded by historians, as conducive to the troubles which ensued in the following reign.

The discovery of the Gunpowder Plot led to severer laws against the Papists, which bore also upon the Puritans ; and it was the general complaint, that the former were far more favoured in the execution of these laws, than the latter. The archbishop was more than ever suspected of a design to make the king absolute. His vicar published a book, which was licensed by the king, and which taught that “ the king was not bound by the laws or by his coronation oath ; that he was not obliged to call a parliament to make laws, but might do it by his own absolute power ; and that it was a great favour to admit the consent of the subjects in giving subsidies.” Fears and jealousies of the designs of the king began to be very generally entertained, and discovered themselves in the lower house, even in his first parliament. The house objected against “ the making of ecclesiastical canons without consent of parliament ;” and complained against the proceedings of the spiritual courts, “ in depriving and imprisoning the clergy, for not extending their subscription beyond what the statute law required.” They already began to denounce the High Commission court, and the oath *ex officio*, “ as hateful, arbitrary, and illegal ;” and asserted “ that those who would not acknowledge the king’s authority to be as extensive as his flatterers were pleased to make it, were blended with the Puritans by the commissioners, in order to have a plea to exercise their power over both<sup>1</sup>.”

The king endeavoured to check this rising spirit in the commons, in the same style in which Elizabeth had done ; but, owing to the different characters of the two potentates, and the change of the times — what had been heard with awful respect from her, was almost ridiculed in James. Far from listening to the admonition that they were not to meddle with prerogative and ecclesiastical matters, they petitioned afresh, “ that the laws might be put in execution against Papists ;” “ that the clergy, deprived on account of not subscribing to the Articles added to those in the statute law, be restored to their employment — demeaning

<sup>1</sup> Warner.

themselves peaceably, without impugning things established by authority;" "that pluralities and non-residence may be restrained;" "that the abuse of excommunication for trivial things may be reformed;" and "that a law may pass for reducing the High Commission court within reasonable and convenient limits," &c. The king, in displeasure, dissolved the parliament, after it had sat seven years; and resolved as much as possible to govern without one. About this time died archbishop Bancroft. He was succeeded in the primacy by Abbot, bishop of London, "a man of a very different temper, and of much more moderate principles in church and state<sup>1</sup>." The new translation of the Bible, which was projected in the Hampton Court conference, was published this year. It had been committed to the charge of fifty-four of the most eminent divines, divided into six companies, and is the same that is now used in the church of England.

By his interference in the Arminian controversies which were now agitating the United Provinces<sup>2</sup>, James gave a clear proof that he had not as yet, at least, departed from the profession of the doctrine of the Scottish and English churches. He strongly remonstrated with the States respecting the appointment of Vorstius to the professorship of Leyden. He speaks of the *impudence* of a disciple of Arminius, lately deceased, in sending a letter with a book to the archbishop of Canterbury, concerning "the apostasy of the saints;" and was highly displeased with the confidence of the man, for affirming in his letter, "that the contents of the book were agreeable to the doctrine of the church of England." Upon this, he ordered Vorstius's book to be burnt in St. Paul's churchyard, and in both the universities; and renewed his request to the States for the banishment of this divine. In his letter he calls Arminius "the enemy of God," and taxes him with "downright heresy." "Unless they give a speedy check," he tells them, "to these beginnings of heresy and schism, they can expect no better issue than the curse of God—than infamy among the reformed churches, and a lasting destruction at home." The king's sentiments appear also by his ratification of the Articles of the Church of Ireland. That kingdom had been much neglected, and the doctrines of the Protestant faith had made but little progress. The king, at the Hampton Court conference, proposing to send preachers there, complained, "that he was but half monarch in that kingdom; that "nothing but their bodies

<sup>1</sup> Warner.<sup>2</sup> A. D. 1611.



were subject to his authority, for their consciences were under the pope's command."

It appears that conformity and episcopacy had been little regarded among the reformers in Ireland, and that the "lay-managers" had encouraged this spirit, that they might be more at liberty to spoil the church property. This had reduced the episcopal body to a very low ebb. The north of Ireland had been replenished chiefly by adventurers from Scotland, who, while they improved the country, had transplanted thither the Presbyterian discipline. The episcopalians, in the settlement of their church, chose to have their own confession of faith. The draught was committed to the care of Dr. James Usher, at that time provost of the college of Dublin, and afterwards lord primate<sup>1</sup>.

These Articles passed the convocation of the Irish church, and were ratified by the lord-deputy Chichester, in the king's name, in 1615. This ratification was indeed ascribed by some to the influence of archbishop Abbot, and Montague, bishop of Bath and Wells, who had then the ascendant at court in church affairs; but there is no proof that James had as yet departed, if he ever did avowedly depart, from the doctrinal faith in which he had been educated<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> These articles seem to have embodied the Lambeth Articles, and are very express on those points of doctrine, from which a sensible departure was perceptible, about this time, in many parts of the reformed churches. It is said in this Confession, "God, from all eternity, did, by his unchangeable counsel, ordain whatsoever in time should come to pass; yet so as thereby no violence be offered to the wills of reasonable creatures: and neither the liberty nor the contingency of the second causes are taken away, but established rather." "By the same eternal counsel, God hath predestinated some unto life, and reprobated some unto death, of both which there is a certain number, known only to God, which can neither be increased nor diminished."

"But the cause moving God to predestinate to life, is not the foreseeing of our perseverance, or good works, or any thing which is in the person predestinated; but only the good pleasure of God himself: for all things being created for the manifestation of his glory, and his glory being to appear both in the objects of his mercy and of his justice, it seemed good to his heavenly wisdom, to choose out a certain number, towards whom he would extend his grace and mercy; leaving the rest to be spectacles of his justice."

"God's elect are, in their time, inseparably united unto Christ by the quickening and vital influence of the Holy Ghost derived from him, *i. e.* from Christ as the Head, to every true member of his mystical body; and are thus made one with Christ, they are truly regenerated, and are made partakers of him and all his benefits."

<sup>2</sup> The king's doctrinal sentiments appear sufficiently plain, by an occurrence which happened the following year. The king being at Royston, a preacher from Cambridge had asserted, in a sermon preached before him, that the committing of

The part which the British divines who were sent by king James to the synod of Dort, bore in that assembly, is also a sufficient proof what were then the sentiments of the king and the nation. But towards the latter end of his reign, James was insensibly led to favour persons who were Arminians;—it is said, because they most flattered him in his notions of illegal prerogative. The king, with his new friends, is supposed to have embraced their principles, as more agreeable to “his reason.” So far as it appears, he never publicly avowed his change of opinion with respect to Arminianism; but preferment had run much in this train. Among the bishops who had embraced the new divinity, were, Barlow, of Lincoln; Neile, of York; Buckeridge, of Rochester; Overall, of Lincoln; Harsnett, of Norwich; Howson, of Oxford; Cary, of Exeter; and lastly, and especially, Laud, of St. David’s; “and thus at last,” as Collier observes, “the anti-Calvinian divines were strong enough to maintain their ground, and at least to balance the other party.”

As Arminianism grew in fashion, the other party, who held the doctrines of the reformation, began to be called “doctrinal Puritans.” Thus, greater subjects of dissension were introduced in the very midst of the church, as well as more serious cause given for separation from it; and, as if every thing was to be branded with the reproachful term that stood opposed to the aspiring party, the name of “State Puritans” was given to all those who, in opposition to the arbitrary maxims of the court, maintained the constitutional principles of the English monarchy. If the court divines considered those who retained the doctrine of the reformed churches, as assimilating with the Presbyterians and separatists, these, on their part, beheld the Arminian doctrines as realising the proffer of king James, that “he was ready to meet the Papists half way.” “The controversy of the Five Points,” as it was called, seems, at this time, to have much oc-

any great sin extinguishes the operations of grace, while the person continues in that state;” and to this he added, “that St. Paul, in the seventh chapter to the Romans, does not describe himself, or the condition of a regenerate person, but one under the law.” The king expressed his dislike at this doctrine, with some warmth, “because Arminius had been lately censured for drawing a resembling exposition out of Socinus’ works.” His majesty, to satisfy himself further, sent to the two divinity professors at Cambridge, for their judgment upon the point. These learned divines gave it, under their hands, that “the predominancy of appetite, and the acting counter to conscience, mentioned in the seventh of Romans, was to be understood of a regenerate man; and that this was Augustin’s last opinion, in his *Retractations*.” The preacher was condemned to a public recantation before the king, to which he submitted.—FULLER.

cupied the pulpits of the church; with encouragement probably, because the ancient faith now began to be publicly questioned. A ridiculous order of the king marks plainly the counsels now prevailing at court: "That no preacher, of what title soever, under the degree of a bishop or dean at the least, do from henceforth presume to preach in any popular auditory, the deep points of predestination, election, reprobation, or of the universality, efficacy, resistibility, or irresistibility of God's grace; but leave these themes rather to be handled by the learned men, and that moderately and modestly, by way of use and application, rather than by way of positive doctrines; being fitter for the schools than for simple auditories."

This was, in fact, to throw into the shade the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel, and to give such a prominence to the practical precepts of religion, that it differed little from a system of mere ethics; which, indeed, was the grand aim of Arminius, and his followers the Remonstrants. In the opinion of all those who were zealous for the doctrines of the reformation, this could not be regarded but as a denial of the Christian faith. It appears also, that the strict observance of the Sabbath day was esteemed by the courtiers as a mark of "puritanism!" And the king greatly alarmed all who were anxiously labouring for the religious observance of the sacred day, by a declaration which he issued<sup>1</sup>, for what he called "his good people's lawful recreations." "His pleasure was, that after the end of Divine service, they should not be disturbed, letted, or discouraged from any lawful recreations; such as dancing, either of men or women; archerie of men, leaping, vaulting, or any such harmless recreations; nor from having May-games, Whitsun-ales, or morris dances, and setting up of May-poles," &c. &c. One reason which was assigned, must have appeared still more strange and extraordinary; this was — "that the Papists might not be persuaded that no honest mirth or recreation was tolerated in our religion." Thus, to gain the good opinion of Papists, the zealous Protestant was ordered to profane the Sabbath day. And as this was more and more pressed in the following reign, men who were attentive to the Holy Scriptures<sup>2</sup>, could only regard it as one of those national sins, which brought down the Divine judgment both upon the church and the state. Archbishop Abbot is said to have forbidden the reading of this declaration in the church where he was present.

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 1618.

<sup>2</sup> See especially Isaiah, lviii. 13, 14.

That these proceedings of the king, and the new rulers of the church, must have strengthened the hands of the Separatists, is sufficiently obvious. Accordingly, we find that the Presbyterians more openly avowed their entire hostility to the establishment; and in the year 1616, the Independents, under their pastor, Henry Jacob, were encouraged to establish what is considered as the first regular congregational church in England, though they differed in no material point from the Brownists of the late reign.

In the year 1620, some of the Brownists, who had retired to Holland under the pastoral care of Mr. John Robinson, resolved to transport and nourish their religious sentiments in America. For this purpose, they procured a charter from the crown of England, and, with several merchant adventurers from this country, embarked for the New World<sup>1</sup>. Their company was divided into nineteen families. During the winter, which set in on their arrival, they suffered the greatest hardships from the severity of the climate; but they maintained their station, to which they gave the name of New Plymouth, and laid the foundation of one of the noblest settlements in North America.

In England, the jealousy of all who cared for the reformation, was greatly excited by the proposal of marrying the prince of Wales into the Roman Catholic family of Spain; and more especially, when the conditions of the projected match were known—"a complete toleration of popery," and "that the children of the royal pair should, for ten years, be committed to the instruction of Papists—which term, at the particular request of the pope himself, was extended to the age of twelve." Their agreeing to such proposals, must have excited suspicions in the breasts of all Protestants, as to the zeal of the king and the prince in the cause of the reformation. It called forth a strong remonstrance from the archbishop of Canterbury, though at that time in deep affliction, from having been accidentally the cause of the death of an attendant.

<sup>1</sup> Robinson took leave of the adventurers with this remarkable farewell: "If God reveal any thing to you by any other instrument of his, be as ready to receive it as ever you were to receive any truth by my ministry; for I am verily persuaded that the Lord has more truth yet to break forth out of his holy Word. For my part, I cannot sufficiently bewail the condition of the reformed churches, who are come to a period in religion, and which will go at present no further than the instruments of their reformation. The Lutherans cannot be drawn to go beyond what Luther saw; whatever part of his will our God has revealed to Calvin, they will rather die than embrace it: and the Calvinists, you see, stick fast where they were left by that great man of God, who yet saw not all things."—NEALE.

The archbishop boldly asserted to the king, that the proposed toleration "could not be done without parliament; unless," he adds, "your majesty will let your subjects see that you will take upon yourself a liberty to throw down the laws of the land at your pleasure." "By your act you labour to set up that most damnable and heretical doctrine of the church of Rome—the whore of Babylon. How hateful will it be to God, and grievous will it be to all your good subjects, the true professors of the Gospel—that your majesty should now shew yourself the patron of those doctrines which your pen has told the world, and your conscience tells yourself, are superstitious, idolatrous, and detestable<sup>1</sup>!"

This marriage did not take place; but, almost immediately, another was proposed with a daughter of the king of France, upon nearly the same conditions; only that the term of "twelve years" for the papistical education of the royal children, was now artfully extended to "thirteen years."

King James died<sup>2</sup> before this marriage was completed, leaving his people divided, dissatisfied, and filled with suspicions destructive of the feelings of loyalty to the unhappy Charles. Although, as a man, and especially when improved by adversity, Charles appears to have been of a far more excellent character than his father, yet, to the great distress of himself and his people, he adopted the same principles of civil and ecclesiastical government, until it was too late to reign by a constitution which he had violated, and which his rebellious subjects had overturned.

Soon after the death of James, the new queen was brought over, with all her establishment of popish priests, according to the articles of her marriage: a sight which, in times of greater candour and liberality, not to say of religious indifference, would have been offensive to a Protestant nation. It is now indeed a fundamental law of the kingdom, that the king shall not marry a Papist; and at this particular period we do not wonder to find that the popish marriage of Charles filled the people with the most extravagant suspicions and prejudices against the king's government; especially when the queen was perceived to be a woman of unbounded influence with the king, while she herself was known to be a bigot to her religion, and to be governed by her Jesuitical priests and confessor. "The king's match with this lady," says bishop Kennet, "was a greater judgment to the

<sup>1</sup> Fuller.

<sup>2</sup> A.D. 1625.

nation, than a plague which then raged in the land." "It was then easy to foresee it might prove very fatal to our English prince and people, and lay in a vengeance for future generations."

It has been remarked, that when a merely professional Protestant marries a Papist who is sincere in that faith, it commonly ends in the conversion of the former; so much more influential, in the various circumstances of life, is even a false religion, than that which is no religion at all. The most malignant enemies of Charles, however, have never been able to fix a stain of this kind upon his memory. His principles seem to have been fixed and steady, and his judgment well informed respecting the corruptions and usurpations of the church of Rome. His mind certainly was free from that antipathy to popery which was so singular a part of the puritanical character, and which transported some in this age into the most ridiculous and cruel excesses. But although Charles was an anti-Papist, yet, by a conviction so strong that it left him no suspicions of himself, or apprehensions of his being suspected by others, he had embraced a new species of protestantism, which, in the eyes of the more zealous of the reformed, appeared to assimilate very much with popery in its doctrinal principles; and which would have been considered by the earlier leaders of the reformation, as favouring that doctrine of the merits of works, on which the whole fabric of the papal superstition had been erected. It did not follow that the suspicions of his subjects were just, when they considered Arminianism as certainly leading to the restoration of popery; it might lead, and, in some instances, it did lead, in a directly opposite direction, to Socinianism itself. But, when it was connected, as with the favoured divines of Charles, with high pretensions of ecclesiastical authority, and a veneration for customs of antiquity, which were ignorantly confounded with the practices of the Papists, there was something to account for the mistake both of zealous Protestants and of the usually sagacious court of Rome—when the former really believed that Laud, with his friends, was travelling fast towards Rome, and the latter thought to hasten his approach by the repeated offers of a cardinal's hat.

Laud was justly considered as the head of the Arminian party. Even before his appointment to the metropolitan see, on the death of archbishop Abbot, he had been, for some time, almost the sole director of the ecclesiastical government; and after the murder of Buckingham, became, in fact, prime minister. His influence in religious matters was early seen in the reign of



Charles, when the list of the king's chaplains was committed to him, to mark with his O. and P. who were orthodox, and who were Puritan. His orthodoxy was to be found, under a very thin disguise, in those opinions which were condemned in the synod of Dort; and his brand of "Puritan" stigmatised all those Episcopalians who openly and consistently held the doctrines of the reformation, as hitherto interpreted, respecting Divine grace. We are informed, moreover, that, but for the dissuasion of bishop Andrews, he would have attempted to procure the sanction of the convocation to Arminianism; or, if not to avowed Arminianism, to the system of instruction which, in fact, puts a negative on the peculiar doctrines of the reformation. But archbishop Abbot was still alive, and others of the prelates had not yet forsaken the ancient faith of the church of England. In the lower house of convocation, it had still a majority; "forty-five of them," according to Dr. Leo, who was one of the number, "had made a covenant among themselves, to oppose every thing that tended towards Pelagianism or semi-Pelagianism<sup>1</sup>." It appears from this, how large a portion of the clergy and people, who were friendly to the established church, were by the conduct of Laud driven into the hands of those who were secretly plotting for its destruction; or, at least, were rendered inefficient in their endeavours to stem the torrent of innovation. For these doctrines, which he opposed, must have appeared to those who held them in sincerity, of far more importance than any external ceremonies or form of church government considered in itself. But here an Arminian or a Latitudinarian manager might easily make a mistake. His determinations on the doctrines of grace, make them of small practical importance. The facts and moral precepts of the Bible are the grand objects of his scheme, and the chief subjects of his ministry. He may be commanded to be silent on the controversy of "The Five Points," and still be at liberty to bring forward all that he deems essential to Christian instruction. But, on the other hand, to a disciple of the reformers, these doctrines lay at the foundation of all his hopes, and are the most powerful incentives to his religious affections; and, in his view, so essential a part of the "mystery of the faith" which he has been taught of God by his holy Word and Spirit, that without giving them their proper position in religious instruction, the facts recorded in Scripture are robbed of their importance, and its moral precepts rendered inefficient in the present condition of mankind. When,

<sup>1</sup> Neale.

therefore, Laud procured from the king a proclamation to suppress the controversy, and to forbid all allusion to the contested points in public discourses, we perceive that the Arminians, in fact, carried their point; nor need we have recourse to the observation of some historians, that “they, being the executors of the law, might connive at its transgression by their own party<sup>1</sup>.”

The house of commons, in which assembly the influence of the “state,” and that of the “doctrinal,” and the “disciplinarian” Puritans were, unhappily, united, began now to feel their strength, and to claim a share in the ecclesiastical jurisdiction, which had hitherto been exercised almost exclusively by the crown. On this occasion, we first read of a “committee of religion” in the house of commons. The report of this committee exhibited to the house certain erroneous opinions, extracted from the works of Montague, one of the king’s chaplains<sup>2</sup>.”

<sup>1</sup> We shall see, in a subsequent page of this history, that James II. adopted the same measure in order to introduce popery.

<sup>2</sup> “1. That he maintained that the church of Rome is, and ever was, a true church, contrary to the sixteenth homily. 2. That the said church has ever remained firm upon the same foundation of sacraments and doctrine instituted of God, contrary to the same homily, and to Articles XIX. and XXXI. 3. That, speaking of those points which belong to faith and good manners, &c., he maintains that none of these are controverted between the Papists and Protestants—that the controverted points are of a lesser and inferior nature, of which a man may be ignorant without any danger to his soul at all, contrary to Articles XIII. and XIX. 4. That images may be used, for the instruction of the ignorant and excitation of devotion, contrary to the second homily. 5. That the saints have not only a memory, but a more peculiar charge of their friends, and that it may be admitted that some saints have a peculiar patronage, custody, protection, and power, as angels also have over certain persons and countries by special deputation, contrary to the same homily. 6. That, contrary to Article XVII., he, the said Richard Montague, doth maintain and affirm, that men justified may fall away and depart from the state which once they had; and may arise again and become new men possibly, but not certainly or necessarily. And the better to countenance this his opinion, he hath wilfully added, falsified, and changed divers words in Article XVI.: and divers other words both in the Book of Homilies and in the Book of Common Prayer, and so misrecited and changed the said places he doth allege, endeavouring thereby to lay a most wicked and malicious slander upon the church of England, as if she did therein differ from the reformed churches beyond the seas, and did consent to those pernicious errors which are commonly called Arminianism, and which the late famous queen Elizabeth and king James, of happy memory, did so piously and diligently labour to suppress. Lastly, that by casting the odious and scandalous name of *Puritans* upon such his majesty’s loving subjects as conform themselves to the doctrine and ceremonies of the church of England; under that name laying upon them divers false and malicious imputations, so to bring them into jealousy and displeasure with his most excellent majesty, and into reproach and ignominy with the rest of the people, to the great danger of

By the procuring of Laud, the king protected Montague, and claimed it as a branch of his supremacy, to determine matters of religion. He expressed his displeasure at the commons, "for calling his chaplain to their bar, and for alarming the nation with the danger of popery." It was thought proper, indeed, to call in Montague's publication, and the answers to it; but the proclamation was so timed, as, without much affecting the sale of the former, to intercept the latter, which were written by Chandler bishop of Chichester, Sutcliffe dean of Exeter, and several others. The parliament was soon afterwards dissolved; but it may easily be imagined what credit they would obtain by these proceedings, with that part of the nation who were zealous for the original doctrines of the reformation; especially when it was found, that although the king's proclamation declared "he would admit of no innovation in doctrine," &c., the licensers of the press, who were Laud and his party, suffered the publication of what they approved, and prohibited those which were contrary to their sentiments.

Another doctrine of the early reformers, that "of the subjection of every soul to the higher powers," and "of non-resistance," was much better relished by the court divines, than their decisions on the doctrines of grace. But instead of applying it to the case of a private Christian, or the ecclesiastical body suffering unjustly by the abuse of sovereign authority, they applied it to the right of the king to impose taxes without consent of parliament—an authority which he did not possess by the fundamental laws of the kingdom. Dr. Sibthorp maintained this doctrine in an assize sermon at Northampton; and Dr. Manwaring, in a sermon preached before the king himself, in which he maintained "that the king is not bound to observe the laws of the realm concerning the subjects' rights and liberties; but that his royal will and pleasure in imposing taxes without consent of parliament, doth oblige the subjects' conscience on pain of damnation," &c.

Archbishop Abbot refused to license the sermon of the former, for which he was suspended by the king. The bishop of London however licensed it, and recommended it—"as agreeable to the doctrines of the primitive church," &c.; and he, with Laud and two other bishops, received a commission to exercise the powers of the metropolitan. Manwaring was called in ques-

sedition and disturbance in the state, if it be not timely prevented."—They call it, moreover, "an encouragement to popery, and labouring by cunning and subtle ways to be reconciled to the see of Rome."

tion by the parliament; but he received preferment from the crown<sup>1</sup>, and was after advanced to the see of St. David's; and within a month, Montague, though voted by the commons "incapable of preferment in the church," was appointed to the bishopric of Chichester.

After these transactions, we shall not be surprised at the low estimation in which the episcopal character was held by the nation at large, and the great influence which the enemies of that order obtained in parliament. At this time, they seem to have made religion very much their care. The presbyterian faction for overturning the hierarchy, had not yet discovered itself among them. They brought in a bill for the better observance of the Lord's day, and one for the augmentation of small livings<sup>2</sup>.

About the same time, also, the commons addressed their remonstrance to the king, in which, after complaining of the increase and almost toleration of popery, they proceeded to complain "that the hearts of his good subjects are no less perplexed by the daily growth and spreading of the Arminian faction: that this, as his majesty well knows, is but a more covert practice for the bringing in of popery: that those who profess these opinions,

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 1628.

<sup>2</sup> A remarkable speech of Sir Benjamin Rudyer, on this occasion, is preserved. Referring to "the many accusations on foot against scandalous ministers," he observes: "I am bold to tell the house, that there are scandalous livings too, which are much the cause of the other—livings of five marks, or five pounds a year;—that men of worth and of good parts will not be muzzled up to such pittance;—that there are some places in England, which were scarce in Christendom, where God was little better known than among the Indians." He refers to the North particularly, and to some parts of Wales. "To plant good ministers in good livings," he insisted, "was the strongest and surest means to establish the true religion—that it would prevail more against papistry than the making of new laws or executing of old." "Though the calling of ministers be never so glorious within, yet outward poverty will bring contempt upon them, especially among those who measure men by the acre and weigh them by the pound, which indeed is the greater part of men." "To conclude, although the Christian religion be established generally through this kingdom, yet until it be planted more particularly, I shall scarce think this a Christian commonwealth." When we consider the neglect of providing religious instruction for the people, and for the due performance of the solemnities of public worship, which this speech exhibited, and reflect that this "lack of service" would probably be supplied by persons hostile to the ecclesiastical constitution, it serves to account for the sudden decay of attachment in the people of England towards the national church; and, in this revolutionary age, towards the civil government itself. Careful observers have remarked the same error in the management of ecclesiastical affairs in our own age; but which, we may now hope, has attracted the attention of those whose duty it is to remedy the defect.

were no better than incendiaries and common nuisances, both in church and state, being Protestants *withoutside* and Jesuits *within*." They point out by name, " Neile of Winchester," and " Laud of Bath and Wells, as justly suspected of unsound opinions this way : " — " that Arminianism being now looked on as the most thriving persuasion, and the road to preferments, many scholars are tempted to declare themselves of that party<sup>1</sup> : " — " that the books which maintain such singularities, are suffered to be printed, and those written against them are suppressed." They complain " of the misrepresenting and laying incredible imputations upon pious, painful, and orthodox preachers." They refer " to the miserable condition of Ireland, where," they say, " popery is openly professed." An answer in the king's name, but known to be drawn up by Laud, denying these facts and representations, could have had but little effect in removing the complaints of the parliament or of the people. Laud was advanced from the see of Bath and Wells to that of London : so complete was the ascendancy of this man at court, and so little acquainted was the king with the true state of the nation. The growth of popery in Ireland was denied also, though it was notorious, from the information given to government by the Protestant bishops of that country, especially from a letter of the excellent bishop Bedell to Laud.

To obviate the charge of an attempt to introduce novelties in doctrine, the Thirty-nine Articles, with a royal declaration, were published. His majesty " confirmed them, and would endure no variation or departing in the least degree : that for the present, though some differences have been ill raised, we take comfort in this, that all clergymen within our realm have always most willingly subscribed to the Articles established, which is an argument to us, that they all agree in the true, usual, literal meaning of the said Articles ; and even in those curious points in which the present differences lie, men of all sorts take the Articles of the church of England to be for them ; which is an argument again that none of them intend any desertion of the Articles established. That therefore in these both curious and unhappy differences, which have for many hundred years in different times and places exercised the church of Christ, we will that all curious search be

<sup>1</sup> " As for our university " — Cambridge, May 1628, — " none do patronise these points " (the Arminian points of doctrine), " either in the schools or pulpit ; though because preferments at court are conferred upon such as incline that way, it causeth some to look that way." — *Letter of Dr. SAMUEL WARD to Archbishop USHER*, let. cxxvii. — PARR.

laid aside, and these disputes shut up in God's promises, as they be generally set forth to us in holy Scripture, and the general meaning of the Articles of the church of England according to them ; and that no man hereafter shall either print or preach to draw the Articles aside any way, but shall submit to it, in the plain and full meaning thereof ; and shall not put his own sense or comment to the meaning of the Articles, but shall take it in the literal and grammatical sense," &c.

All this, in the decree of an indifferent arbiter, binding both parties from running into excesses on either side, would at least have been plausible ; but, as coming from the counsel of Laud, who was also to be the judge of its observance, in the present state of the controversy, the tendency of the declaration could not be mistaken. It is well known what he and his party, now in power, meant by "curious search" and "general meaning of the Articles," and who would be judged by "the commission ecclesiastical" as aggressors. Those persons, therefore, in and about London, who were zealous about the doctrines of the reformation, drew up a petition, which was intended to be presented to the king, to induce him to recall his declaration. The petition sets forth, "What a restraint was laid upon them from preaching the saving doctrines of God's free grace in election and predestination : that this had brought them under a very uncomfortable dilemma, either of falling under the Divine displeasure, if they did not execute their commission in declaring 'the whole counsel of God ;' or of being censured for opposition to his majesty's authority, in case they preached the received doctrines of the church, and attacked the Pelagian and Arminian heresies, *both boldly published from pulpit and press,*" &c. This address was stopped in its passage, and never reached the king.

When the parliament met, they concerned themselves in this controversy, and made a counter-declaration. "We, the commons in parliament assembled, do claim, protest, and avow for truth the sense of the Articles of Religion, which were established by parliament in the 13th year of our late queen Elizabeth, which, by the public act of the church of England, and by the general current expositions of the writers of our church, have been delivered to us ; and we reject the sense of the Jesuits and Arminians, and all others, wherein they differ from us<sup>1</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Pym said in this committee, "That by the Articles set forth in 1562, by the Catechism set forth in the days of Edward VI.; by the writings of Martin Bucer and Peter Martyr ; by the constant professions sealed with the blood of



In the committee of religion held on this occasion, "an Arminian" was said to be "the spawn of a Papist"—a specimen of the low and rancorous phraseology which was now coming too much into vogue. But surely the most sober and moderate could not but be confirmed in their suspicions of the tendency of Laud's administration, when they saw indulgences to Papists made a branch of the royal revenue, and Sir Richard Weston, a notorious Papist, created earl of Portland, and made lord high treasurer of England! A zeal for the ancient faith and against illegal taxation, went hand in hand in this parliament. It was at length dissolved in great displeasure, and some of its principal members were thrown into prison<sup>1</sup>. The king had taken the fatal resolution to govern without parliaments.

The blame of these proceedings was laid upon Laud, now prime minister, and the libels of the day began to speak a language which threatened the murderous scenes that some time after were disclosed, and that ought to have alarmed every true Christian and lover of peace. For twelve years the king governed without a parliament, and the administration was conducted upon the principle of an absolute monarchy. Laud, and the Arminian bishops in the church, carried into execution the king's Declaration: how it was to be practically understood, appeared in the case of Davenant, bishop of Salisbury. This prelate preached before the king, on the words, "Eternal life is the gift of God," &c. The gratuity of the gift led him to mention "the eternal destination thereof." Being summoned before the council to answer for his contempt of the "Declaration," his apology was, "That the doctrine of predestination was not forbidden by the Declaration, because all the Thirty-nine Articles are established by it, of which that on predestination was one." His apology was not received, but he was told, that "his majesty's pleasure was, that these mysterious points should be passed over in silence." The king himself told him, when he received his pardon, "that the subject was too big for the people's understanding, and therefore he was resolved not to give leave for discussing this controversy in the pulpit; and that the preachers' insisting on reformation, and a good life, would be much more serviceable to the audience."

many martyrs, as Cranmer, Ridley, and others; by the Thirty-six Articles of queen Elizabeth, and by the Articles agreed upon at Lambeth as the doctrine of the church of England; and by those which king James sent to Dort and to Ireland, — it appears evidently what is the established religion of the realm."

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 1629.

Laud, however, did not reign undisturbed. In Ireland, the lord primate Usher “let his pen run out a little in defence of the predestinarian scheme ;” and Downham, bishop of Derry, published a discourse concerning Perseverance, in which were some passages that clashed directly with the king’s Declaration. To make the primate feel the king’s displeasure, he was ordered to call in Downham’s book, and the press was ordered to be better looked to<sup>1</sup>. But the preachers and lecturers in Laud’s own diocese of London gave him most uneasiness, and all the powers of the High Commission were let loose upon them. Doctrines which but a few years before it was counted almost heresy to call in question, were now visited with fines absolutely ruinous, and with imprisonment. Mr. Bernard, lecturer of St. Sepulchre’s, having uttered words deemed offensive against Arminianism, and the new ceremonies which Laud had introduced, was suspended, excommunicated, fined £1000, condemned in costs of suit, and committed to prison. These arbitrary judgments and disproportionate punishments were not unfrequent ; and men even of learning and respectability were subjected to disgraceful corporal punishments. The new ceremonies referred to, were, “the introduction of images and paintings in the churches, with certain ornaments for altars, lighted tapers,” &c., and various observances probably not immediately adopted from the church of Rome, but introduced in imitation of the primitive church in the third and fourth centuries.

With the exception of the infatuated Laud and his party, all men could see the great impolicy of these proceedings at this particular juncture, when a great part of the nation contemplated every thing of the kind as papistical, and tending to idolatry, and treated them with an abhorrence more unreasonable and more extravagant, than was the fond superstition with which their imposers cherished them. And whatever may be the opinion of some persons in this age, of the great importance of a due regard to ceremoniousness and solemn observance in the conducting of public worship — often too much neglected in Protestant churches — they would not, perhaps, on examination, approve of the taste of bishop Laud in some of the practices he would have introduced. But a still more serious cause of offence was given, by the republication of king James’s Declaration, allowing of sports on the Lord’s day, and an order compelling the clergy to read it in their churches. Some refused to comply,

<sup>1</sup> Collyer.

and suffered severely for their disobedience. At the same time, many active magistrates were checked in their attempts to abolish the church wakes, &c., which were little better than remnants of paganism, and frequently scenes of debauchery — and all this, let it be remembered, notwithstanding the late law for the better observance of the Sabbath.

During these violent proceedings, a great number of persons, whose principal object was — liberty to serve God in the way their consciences approved, migrated from their native country, and laid the foundations of a new nation in North America. “ During the twelve years of Laud’s administration, four thousand planters went over ; and it was computed that the four settlements of New England — Plymouth, Massachusetts Bay, Connecticut, and Newhaven, all which were accomplished before the beginning of the civil war — drained England of four or five hundred thousand pounds in money, — a great sum in those days. The chief leaders of the people into these parts were Puritan ministers, who, being hunted from one diocese to another, at last chose this wilderness for their retreat.” Mr. Neale, their historian, speaks of a list of seventy-seven divines, “ who became pastors of sundry little churches and congregations in America, before the year 1640, all of whom were in orders in the church of England, men of strict sobriety and virtue ; plain, serious, affectionate preachers, exactly conformable in sentiment to the doctrinal Articles of the church of England.”

It was afterwards remembered with amazement, that, in the spring of 1638, when eight ships were lying at the same time in the Thames, about to proceed to New England, and were stopped by an order of council, among the intended emigrants were John Hampden, Arthur Haselrigge, and Oliver Cromwell !

It will easily be conceived, and the sad events of the subsequent years shew it more plainly, how these measures sunk the character of the bishops and conforming clergy in the eyes of the nation. Those, on the contrary, who seemed to suffer for conscience’ sake, were caressed and revered ; so that, as has been remarked by an historian of these events, “ All England turned Puritan.”

Meanwhile, Laud, in whom the unhappy Charles seems to have placed unbounded confidence, as if he had put down all opposition in one kingdom, attempted to introduce the same terms of conformity into the church of Scotland — still more averse to the yoke than that of England, and even violently bigoted to an opposite system. But the nation rose as one man

against him ; and rather than see their religion violated in what they deemed essential points, chose to incur the imputation of rebellion against the prince. This was the beginning of Charles's troubles. The expedition against the "covenanting Scots," ended to his disadvantage, and sunk the credit of his power; and at the same time encouraged all who were dissatisfied or disaffected in England. His treasury, exhausted by this contest, induced him again to have recourse to a parliament. They met in April 1640. The commons insisted upon "farther securities for property," in reference to "the illegal taxes," — "for the better settlement of religion," — and "for privilege of parliament," before they would proceed to grant a subsidy<sup>1</sup>. The king, by the advice of his council, dissolved them in haste, and imprisoned some of the members; and he still further offended his people by continuing the sitting of the convocation, and by warranting their making of new canons for the government of the church. Some of these canons were pronounced unconstitutional and illegal, even by the conforming clergy; and others affected the property and the liberty of the subject.

Symptoms of riot now began to appear in the metropolis, and many leading persons in England, some even of the nobility, secretly encouraged the Scots, and were arming in defence of their covenant. Charles, by his own interest with his courtiers, and — which greatly prejudiced his cause — by the queen's interest with the Papists, prepared such an army as he could to oppose the Scots. But the nation in general, not aware of consequences, considered the cause of Scotland as their own; and the king finding it impossible to carry on the war, was compelled to receive conditions from his subjects in arms against him. One of these was, "that a free parliament should be called immediately." The preponderating weight of prerogative, which, for many reigns, had disturbed the balance of the constitution, was lost from that moment. The house of lords was far from possessing that weight it once had, even with respect to the temporal peers; the power of the church had been much impaired in the plunder of her property during the reformation, and the reigns which had followed, and late events had still further robbed the superior clergy of their due influence over the body of the people. There was nothing now that could effectually withstand the power of the house of commons. Would

<sup>1</sup> Yet Lord Clarendon says, that this parliament "was made up of sober and dispassionate men, disposed to do the king service.

they be content with their proper portion of authority in the commonwealth? or would they, as the aristocracy and as the crown had done, each in its turn, avail themselves, to their own destruction, of their present advantage to aim at illegal and unconstitutional power? This was now to be seen.

When the parliament assembled, it was found to be composed of members not favourable, as might be supposed at such a crisis, to the late administration. The impeachment of Laud, and the instruments of the late arbitrary and illegal government followed of course; and at the same time the victims of their oppressions were restored or set at liberty, with something of triumph. But contemporary writers, judging of the house from the members who first took the lead, could discover nothing like a disposition to overturn the established government in church or state. The person and the office of the king were still venerated; and though they disliked all the novelties which Laud had introduced, both in doctrine and in the church ceremonies, Lord Clarendon reckons among the lords only two, Say and Brook, as "enemies to the entire fabric of the ecclesiastical government." "Among the leading men in the house of commons, Lenthall, their speaker," he says, "was of no ill reputation for his affection to the government both in church and state; and declared on his death-bed, after the restoration, that he had always esteemed episcopal government to be the best government for the church, and accordingly died a dutiful son of the church of England." Of Mr. Pym, the man of the greatest influence in the house, his lordship remarks, "that though he was an enemy to the Arminians, he professed to be very entirely for the doctrine and discipline of the church of England." Of Denzil Hollis, that "he was well pleased with the government of the church." Sir Henry Vane the elder, he observes, "not only appeared highly conformable himself, but exceedingly sharp against those that were not;" and Sir John Hotham was very well affected to the government. His lordship was rather dubious alone of Mr. Hampden; but says, "Most believed that his dislike was rather to some churchmen than to the ecclesiastical government of the church; and, moreover, that all the earl of Essex's party, in both houses, desired no alteration in the court or government, but only of the persons that acted in it; nay, the chief officers of his army were so zealous for the liturgy, that they would not hear a man as a minister that had not episcopal ordination." His lordship concludes respecting the parliament, that, "as they were all of them, almost to a man, con-

formists to the church of England, they had all imaginable duty to the king, and affection for the government established by law. As for the church, the major part even of these persons, [who were hostile,] would have been willing to satisfy the king, rather because they had no reason to think the two houses, indeed either of them, could have been induced to pursue the contrary." That an assembly of this description should, in a few months, become so entirely altered in its character, that it should destroy the constitution both in church and state, and become the instruments, first of the Presbyterian faction, and next of the Independent separatists, may justly be considered as astonishing. The chief cause must be assigned,—the possession of a power too great and uncontrolled, which the circumstances of the times had given them; and which, in popular assemblies, as well as in monarchs, has often proved too much for human wisdom and virtue. Had the crown been content with its legal prerogative when it *could* take more, this present crisis had not happened; and had the house of commons, in the plenitude of their power, been content with their just privileges and proper place in the constitution, they had not fallen the victims of factious and of ambitious men.

The first measure of the commons, with respect to religion, was to annul the canons passed in the late convocation, as illegal. The house, however, acted as if the supremacy had passed from the crown to them; and to give efficacy to their votes, they even ordered their own commissioners to be sent into all the counties, to demolish and remove out of the churches and chapels all images, altars, or tables turned altar-wise, crucifixes, superstitious pictures, and other monuments and relics of idolatry; agreeably to the injunctions, as they said, of Edward and Elizabeth<sup>1</sup>." This was a clear violation of the constitution, which has lodged all the executive power in the crown. They also punished by their own votes, as delinquents, those that were accused before them of enforcing the penalties of the late ecclesiastical jurisdiction. It is true, their professed object was to cut off all illegal additions and innovations which the superstition of the late times had introduced, and to reduce the discipline of the church to the standard of the statute law. But it may be questioned whether the legislature had not, by its own act, given to the crown that power of originating rites and ceremonies; and if so, the executors of the royal will, as far as they had not acted

<sup>1</sup> Neale.



contrary to law, could not justly be punished. This conduct of the house of commons appeared to have an amazing effect upon the nation at large; it soon introduced complete anarchy in ecclesiastical affairs, and encouraged all the enemies of the establishment to exert themselves for its destruction. "Great numbers of anonymous pamphlets appeared," Mr. Neale confesses, "not without indecent and provoking language, under these and the like titles: 'Lord Bishops not the Lord's Bishops'—'A Comparison between the Liturgy and the Mass Book'—'Service Book no better than a Mess of Pottage.'" All this mightily took with the vulgar, but betrays in all its encouragers a total absence of that "meekness of wisdom" of which the Apostle speaks, and marks the source from whence *this wisdom* came<sup>1</sup>.

Lord Brook, (though a little untimed adverting to what was to follow,) in attacking the order of bishops, reflects in an ungenerous manner upon the "low pedigree of the present bench;" and yet, in the view of abstract reason, that mind must be particularly constituted, which sees something more worthy of respect in those hereditary honours which the institutions of society admit, than where they invest certain persons with a high official dignity—and that of a sacred character. So violent a clamour was now produced against the clergy, that they could hardly officiate according to the late injunctions, without being affronted, nor walk the streets in their habits, without being reproached as "popish priests," "Cæsar's friends," &c. The reputation of the liturgy began to sink; reading prayers was called a lifeless form of worship, and a quenching of the Holy Spirit, whose assistance, it was maintained, was promised in the matter as well as in the manner of our prayers. If this taste of the public was favourable to men of real and popular abilities, it called forth a multitude of imitators, whose inspired prayers, received as oracles, were not only contemptible, but of most mischievous tendency; and, on some occasions, breathed the malevolence of a very different spirit from that which Christ has promised to pour upon his faithful people.

But if, under the administration of Laud, superstition had had its reign, enthusiasm and the fanatic spirit were now to have their run in the nation; and such was their lawless extravagance, that the doctrines of the reformation, which were generally professed during this period, lost their credit with the nation at large; and Arminianism, and what was deemed rational Chris-

<sup>1</sup> St. James.

tianity, won more by the excesses of some persons who held the doctrines of the reformation, during the reign of the parliament and the protectorate, than by all the severities of Laud's High Commission, and the favour of Charles towards the professors of Arminianism. Nothing, indeed, can more illustrate the necessity of due subordination and regular government to the welfare of the church, than a minute examination of the history of this period, for which we have a great abundance of valuable materials, speaking the sense of all parties, but which the limits of this work will hardly permit me to touch. It is remarkable, however, that this mischief was done to religion, at a time distinguished for the production of great and learned divines. Each of the principal denominations, which shewed themselves and framed their different communities in these scenes of confusion, produced teachers which would have been the pride of the church in any age, and whose works, on the great essentials of Christianity, may instruct ages yet to come. But through the divisions, and dissensions, and the factious spirit of the times, and through the prejudices and jealousies which remained against their doctrines when these times were over, the light of the reformation, as a national profession, may be said to have been nearly extinguished in England.

The presbyterian interest now began to gather strength among the disciplinarian Puritans, the great body of whom hitherto professed to require only a different modification of episcopacy, and a few alterations in ceremonies and subscription; but the example of Scotland, and the presence of the Scottish commissioners — hailed as deliverers of the nation, and burning with fiery zeal against the bishops and their sacred office — added new life and spirit to the English Presbyterians.

The Brownists, or Independents, who had assembled in private and shifted from house to house for twenty or thirty years, resumed courage, and shewed themselves to the public. Some of this body had at different times<sup>1</sup> branched off from the main stock, dissenting on the subject of infant baptism, and formed themselves into new communities. Hence, the origin of the Particular Baptists in England.

The house of commons, backed by an inflamed and riotous populace in the metropolis, now carried all before them. If the vindictive prosecution of the earl of Strafford to death is to be vindicated, it will apologise for much in the conduct of princes

<sup>1</sup> According to Crosby, in 1633, 1638, and 1639.

who, urged by motives of state policy and suspicion of the insecurity of their power, have filled the scaffolds with the victims of their tyranny. The king, against his conscience, consented to the death of his late minister, and thereby lost himself in his own opinion and in the opinion of his friends. At the very same time, as though it had been the act of a despairing mind, he passed a bill which the parliament presented to him, divesting himself of the power of dissolving them, till they should think proper to dissolve themselves. The constitution was now entirely overturned; but had the parliament acted with any degree of moderation, and had they not forgotten their duty as Christians, to be subject to the king as supreme, the subsequent scenes of trouble and bloodshed had never been disclosed, and the future government of the nation might have been settled on a fair and equitable plan. The king made no opposition to the bills which took away the High Commission, and abolished the court of the Star Chamber; so that the prerogative of the crown, both in ecclesiastical and civil affairs, was sufficiently curtailed. The exercise of church discipline, especially after this, could not have been oppressive, and all inferior spiritual courts might have been regulated at pleasure.

But the malicious prosecutions of the bishops, now altogether powerless, and, by various arts, exposed to popular ignominy, did not look like an intention to *reform* abuses only, or merely to regulate; yet the promotions in the church, which occurred about this time, seem to have been made with a view of appeasing the popular resentment. Williams, bishop of Lincoln, who had been exposed to a most unjust and severe prosecution under the tyranny of Laud, and was then confined in the Tower, was made archbishop of York. Hall, whose piety and learning all parties acknowledged, was translated to Norwich. Archbishop Usher, driven from Ireland by the rebellion, had a seat given him on the English bench. The last two of these prelates defended the episcopal government with great ability, but with that temper, and with a disposition to yield so much, respecting the limits of the bishops' power, in order to reduce the English hierarchy more to the model of episcopacy in the primitive ages, that the moderate of all parties would probably have been satisfied. "But," Mr. Neale observes, "the court bishops would abate nothing so long as the crown could support them; and as the parliament increased in power the Puritan divines stiffened in their demands, till methods of accommodation were impracticable." The court bishops, as they are designated,

one cannot but think, might have been despised, had due countenance been given to the "Puritan bishops," for so they were esteemed by the other party; but instead of this, every measure of the house of commons had a tendency to lower the estimation of the episcopal order. Even the house of peers affected to treat the bishops with contempt, little aware how intimately the privileges of their own order were, at this crisis, connected with the cause of the bishops, whose office and persons they concurred with the other house in exposing to popular abuse and insult. The committing of twelve bishops to prison, on account of their protestation, considering all the circumstances, cannot be paralleled with any act of tyranny during the late administration.

But, as is wont to be the case in popular assemblies acting without control, the more violent party, though fewer in number, began to have the ascendant among the commons. And there was another cause, which, on the point of episcopacy, hardly left them free to debate; this was their dependence on the assistance of the Scottish army, now quartered in the northern counties, with their agents at the doors of the parliament-house; so that all moderate counsels in ecclesiastical affairs were easily overruled.

The conduct of the king himself gave a deep wound to the cause of episcopacy. With the politic intention of separating the Scots from his too powerful opponents in England, he took a journey into his northern kingdom, for the purpose of satisfying his subjects in all their demands. For this purpose he legalised all their late acts; and among the rest an act which had declared, "that the government of the church by archbishops and bishops was repugnant to the Word of God; that the prelates were enemies to the propagation of the true reformed Protestant religion; and that, for this, reason, their order was to be suppressed, and their lands given to the king, his heirs, and successors<sup>1</sup>." The king not only took the lands, but gave them to the Covenanters, hoping to appease them.

This measure of the unhappy king led some to conclude he was not sincere in his concessions, but would seize the first opportunity to annul all that he had done, as procured by violence; and it encouraged others to argue, that what he had consented to abolish in Scotland, as "against the Word of God," he might be brought to put down in England. This was one of

<sup>1</sup> Lord Clarendon.

his acts which greatly affected the king's conscience, when he reflected, in the subsequent season of his deeper affliction. Charles was not bad enough to approve in his heart such crooked policy ; neither was his goodness of a character sufficiently firm to prevent the introduction of such dishonest measures into his political councils. In the meanwhile, the commons, in the view of a religious age grew highly in reputation, not only by abolishing by their order the late innovations in divine worship, complained of as papistical and superstitious, but by enacting, " that the Lord's day should be duly observed and sanctified ; all dancing or other sports, either before or after Divine service, be forborne and restrained ; and that the preaching of God's Word be permitted in the afternoon, in the several churches and chapels of the kingdom, and that ministers and preachers be encouraged thereto<sup>1</sup>." The contrast of this act of supremacy assumed by the commons, with the king's " Book of Sports," and Laud's endeavours to put down preaching, and confine the clergy to asking questions out of the shorter Catechism, without explanation, in the afternoon service, that the people might sooner go to their sports, must indeed have reflected great dishonour on the late government.

The king, on his return from Scotland, was in a manner compelled to consent to taking away the bishops' votes in parliament. It is said, that the moderate Episcopalians were brought to agree to this measure, in order to save the spiritual authority of the bishops, — for the dissolution of the order entirely was now seriously threatened, — and that the king was induced to consent, under apprehensions for the queen's safety, who, feeling her residence no longer secure, was preparing to depart the kingdom.

The immediate cause of the popular rage against the queen, was the late insurrection and horrid massacre of the Protestants in Ireland, in which TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND were put to death, in circumstances of cruelty and barbarity almost unheard of in the history of mankind ! It was suspected that the queen and her popish counsellors had some hand in the stirring up of this insurrection, which, contrary to their intention, ended so tragically ; and that it was done with a view to assist the royal cause. " The soberer part of the nation could not believe that the Irish rebels had the king's commission<sup>2</sup>," which they pretended ; yet, in the hands of his enemies, at such a time as this,

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 1641.

<sup>2</sup> Baxter.

the very report was of infinite prejudice to his affairs. It was Lord Clarendon's opinion, that if the Irish Papists "had not at that time rebelled, and in that manner, it is very probable that the miseries which afterwards befell the king, and the kingdom, had been prevented." We are not surprised, after these transactions, at any suspicions and measures against the Papists." "It now appears," said Mr. Pym, in the house of commons, "that the religion of the Papists is incompatible with any other religion; it is destructive of all others, and can endure nothing that opposes it. There are other religions that are not right, but not so destructive as popery; for the principles of popery are subversive of all states and persons that oppose it."

It must be recollected, that before the king signed the act for taking away the votes of the bishops in parliament, he had quitted his palace at Whitehall, for fear of the populace, whose tumultuous and rebellious proceedings, it must be admitted, the commons had connived at and countenanced: "being sensible that their strength was among the inhabitants of London, they were tender of entering upon rigorous measures<sup>1</sup>." Here was the commencement of the civil war. After this, the two houses, so far as their influence extended, seizing the executive power of the crown, took it into their own hands; and the king,—with the most solemn protestations, which certainly satisfied many well-wishers to the constitution who sided with him, that he meant only to recover his lawful power,—from this period began to prepare for war<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Neale.

<sup>2</sup> How the parliament stood affected towards religion at this period, we discover from a remonstrance they had sent to the king. They would have indulged the moderate Puritans in what they had so long contended for in regard of ceremonies, and in a reduction of the bishops' power; but as to any scheme in the majority, at this time, to erect the presbyterian government, there was evidently none; and much less any desire to grant toleration and liberty of conscience. They declare in this remonstrance, "that it was far from their purpose or desire to let loose the golden reins of discipline and government in the church, to leave private persons or particular congregations to take up what form of Divine service they please; for we hold it requisite that there should be, throughout the whole realm, a conformity to that order which the laws enjoin, according to the Word of God; and we desire to unburthen the consciences of men from needless and superstitious ceremonies, to suppress innovations, and to take away the monuments of idolatry. To effect this intended reformation, we desire there may be a general synod of the most grave, pious, learned, and able divines of this island, assisted with some from foreign parts professing the same religion with us," &c.

To this part of the petition the king had answered, "As for abridging the power of the clergy, if there remain any excesses or usurpations in any persons,



When the nation divided itself, in this civil war, between the king and the two houses of parliament, the nobility and gentry were found very generally to be for the king; the middle and lower ranks, and especially the traders and populace of large towns, for the most part were with the two houses of parliament. The contest, it is probable, had the English been left to themselves, would soon have been terminated in favour of the king, though with some reserves and limitations; for the greater part of his friends by no means meant to restore the late arbitrary government in church and state; nor had they that opinion of the king's good faith, and freedom from the influence of the popish counsels of the queen, that they could have neglected sufficient pledges and securities. Charles, in his addresses to the people, every where promised upon the word of a king, that for the future he would govern by law. Upon this assurance, about forty of the members of the upper house, and several members of the house of commons, signed an engagement to defend his majesty's person and prerogative, and to support the Protestant religion established by law, &c.

But the two houses saw the policy of calling in the assistance of the Scots, already in arms, and victorious in their late contest. The Scots would grant assistance on no other terms than the total abolition of prelacy, and setting up their presbyterian discipline. With them it was a war for religion. It appears, by the answer of the general assembly to the two houses, dated August 3, 1642, that they took up arms against their king, who had removed every grievance of which they could complain—in order “to pluck up prelacy, root and

we neither have, nor will protect them. Concerning superstitions, as you style them, and removing unnecessary ceremonies, we will concur in the removal of any illegal innovations which may have crept in; and if our parliament shall advise us to call a national synod for that purpose, we will consider of it.” “That for ceremonies in religion, which are in their own nature indifferent, he is willing, in tenderness to any number of his subjects, that a law should be made for the exemption of tender consciences from punishment or prosecution for such ceremonies, as by the judgment of most men are held to be indifferent, and of some to be absolutely unlawful,” &c. “He cannot, without grief of heart, and some tax upon himself and his ministers for not executing the laws, look upon the bold license of some men in printing pamphlets and sermons, so full of bitterness and malice against the present government and the law established, so full of sedition against himself and the peace of the kingdom, that he is many times amazed to consider by what eyes these things are seen, and by what ears they are heard,” &c.

branch," in another part of his dominions, "as a plant which God had not planted."

The two houses agreed to receive their assistance upon these conditions. From political motives, they consented to sacrifice the episcopal government of the church of England — the king was persuaded, "not for the love of presbyterianism." To gain the Scots, they immediately passed an ordinance for the abolition of episcopacy, and seized all the property belonging to cathedral churches, and to the dignitaries of the church. This property was to be invested in the hands of trustees, for such stipends and pensions to the sufferers, as the parliament should think fit, and for the maintenance of preaching.

This ordinance passed the lords' house September 10, 1642, but was not to take effect till the 5th of November, 1643. The interval of more than a year, between the passing of the act and its execution, looks as if they were not quite in earnest, or at least meant to leave room for accommodation; nor did they take any immediate steps to substitute another form of church government. But, though they *had* declared "it was not their purpose and desire to let loose the golden reins of discipline," they had effectually done so already, by the imprisonment of the bishops, and by the check that was given to the spiritual courts; and now that, after the expiration of the year, the whole fabric was to be taken down, no other government was prepared to be erected in its room.

Thus the parliament may fairly be said to have *pawned* their supremacy to the Scots, for their assistance in the political contest in which they were engaged; and nothing would satisfy the Scots, but that the English nation should take their covenant and set up presbytery. To promote this purpose, an assembly of divines was called together by the parliament, the choice of whom was chiefly entrusted to the knights of the shires. The persons named by them, with lay-assessors taken out of both houses, and the Scottish commissioners who were come to see the treaty observed, met in Henry VII.'s chapel, on the 1st of July, 1643. Archbishop Usher, Brownrig, bishop of Exeter, and Westfield, bishop of Bristol, were chosen among the divines, but refused to obey the summons, deeming it an unlawful assembly. The character of the clergy who did attend, has been very differently given<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Compare Baxter, Neale, Clarendon, and Milton.

We must, perhaps, as in most similar cases, take the medium between the character of the friend and that of the political foe; but it often appears, in the history of mankind, that those whose zeal has been most conspicuous in calling for reform, are not the most proper persons to whose care that reformation should be entrusted. But a set of more moderate Puritans, — using that term, as it was then applied, to denote those who disliked the late innovations of Laud, and who would have been willing to correct many things most complained of in the ecclesiastical discipline, without changing the principles of the government settled at the reformation, — would not have answered the purpose of the parliament that called them together, which was, to draw up such an ecclesiastical constitution as would please their allies the Scots. Accordingly, a solemn covenant prepared in Scotland, was approved at Westminster, and sworn to and subscribed by the assembly and both houses of parliament. This covenant bound the subscribers “to endeavour, without respect of persons, the extirpation of popery and prelacy, superstition, heresy, schism, and profaneness; to maintain the rights and privileges of the parliament along with the king’s authority, and to discover and bring to justice all incendiaries and malignants.” This was ordered to be taken by all persons above eighteen years of age; they who refused on the second tender, were reported to the house. It was applied as a test to all the clergy whom they suspected. Those who refused, who amounted to some thousands, were cast out of their livings; and, by this means, a hundred and ninety-five graduates, in Cambridge alone, were despoiled of their livelihood, and banished the university, without any crime or accusation objected against them<sup>1</sup>. No measure complained of in the conduct of Charles and of archbishop Laud, could be more tyrannical and unjust than this; and when we consider the sense in which “incendiaries and malignants,” who were to be brought to justice, were then understood, it must be acknowledged that the covenant breathes a language of bloody vengeance — to be paralleled only under the dominion of Rome in the most barbarous times.

An early victim to the Scottish alliance, and to their covenant, was archbishop Laud himself, the memory of whose errors must all be buried in the injustice of his sentence, and the conduct of his rancorous persecutors. The superstitious ceremonies and rigid conformity which he had introduced, could not be so de-

<sup>1</sup> Warner.

destructive of piety, as the licentiousness he beheld in the church before his death, by the misrule of the parliament; nor had his Arminianism half the effect in withdrawing the nation from the original doctrines of the reformation, that the conduct of the Puritan parliament had, and the extravagant fanaticism introduced under their patronage. The ignorant and self-appointed teachers who arose in the anarchy of these times, — though, in fact, they divided upon the question of “grace” and “works,” and the most fanatical were certainly Arminian, — have indeed brought contempt upon revealed religion itself, which is felt by the nation at this day; and the blame of all this must certainly be attached to the proceedings of this parliament, which overthrew the ancient ecclesiastical constitutions of the kingdom, while they still professed great zeal for the doctrines of the church of England.

The Presbyterians found it, however, more easy to pull down a national establishment, than to erect another in its place. They published their directory of worship. Those who did not observe it were to forfeit forty shillings; those who wrote or preached against it, were to be fined from five to fifty pounds. The use of the Common Prayer Book was forbidden, even in a private place or family, under the penalty of five pounds for the first offence, ten for the second, and for the third a year’s imprisonment.

The Anabaptists made a considerable figure at this time, and spread into several separate congregations, with an enthusiastic fury. Some of these were therefore imprisoned, and not with less rigour than the Presbyterians had themselves complained of, under Bancroft and Laud. They even passed an ordinance, that all persons “who shall maintain, defend, or publish by preaching or writing, the heresies which are after-mentioned, with obstinacy, shall be committed to prison without bail till the next jail delivery; and if the indictment shall then be found, and the party not abjure, he shall suffer the pains of death, as in the case of felony.”

The parliament, however, never thoroughly relished the Scottish discipline, though they submitted in some degree while they needed the assistance of that nation. The Erastian system, which would restrict the power of the church to persuasion and admonition alone, had always many advocates in England, and not a few in the present parliament.

But the rising power of the Independents soon terminated the reign of the Presbyterian party in the house. Among the

assembly of divines at Westminster, were found "five dissenting brethren," as they were termed, most of whom had returned from Holland, whither the severe laws against nonconformity had driven them, under the name of Brownists<sup>1</sup>. These could not agree in points of discipline with the assembly, and earnestly petitioned for a toleration of the congregational or independent form of church government. The disorder of the times, indeed, had so dissolved the bands of the national church, that many congregations might have been thrown undesignedly into this form; and although there was no natural connexion between this form of church government and antimonarchial or republican sentiments, yet it suited best with these notions of civil liberty, which began very much to prevail in the nation. It fell in well also, in one mode of its administration, with the fanatical temper of the times, which could hardly brook the superiority of a stated pastor, but claimed a share for every member of the flock who thought himself capable of bearing part in the ministerial functions. This spirit had much spread itself in the army; and having very few chaplains among them, officers, subalterns, and privates turned preachers, and had their "called churches<sup>2</sup>."

The parliament passed an ordinance against lay-preaching, and desired Sir Thomas Fairfax to see it put in execution in the army. The same was sent to all civil officers, and offenders were ordered to be taken into custody, and punishment threatened; but

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Thomas Goodwin, Sidrach Symson, Philip Nye, Jer. Burroughs, and Will. Bridge.

<sup>2</sup> "The officers," says Mr. Neale, "set up for preachers in their several regiments, depending upon a kind of miraculous assistance of the Divine Spirit, without any study or preparation; and when their imaginations were heated, they gave vent to the most crude and undigested absurdities; nor did the evil rest there; for, from preaching at the head of their regiments, they took possession of the country pulpits where they were quartered, till at length they spread the infection over the whole nation, and brought the regular ministry into contempt. Most of the common soldiers were religious and orderly, and, when relieved from duty, spent their time in prayer and religious conference, like men who carried their lives in their hands; but, for want of prudent and regular instruction, were swallowed up in the depths of enthusiasm. Mr. Baxter, therefore, observes very justly: 'It was the ministers that lost all, by forsaking the army and betaking themselves to an easier and quieter way of life. When the earl of Essex's army went out, each regiment had an able chaplain, but after Edge-hill fight most of them went home and left the army to their own conduct.' But even after the decisive battle of Naseby, he admits, great numbers of the officers and soldiers were sober and orthodox; and from the little good which he did while among them, he concludes, that if their ministers would have followed his measures, the king, the parliament, and religion might have been saved."

the parliament, in the exercise of their supremacy, had raised a spirit which they could not lay.

It was on this spirit, nurtured and directed with a consummate prudence, that the famous Oliver Cromwell built his greatness, which enabled him to subdue both the king and the parliament, and place himself in the vacant throne. To the spirit which he fomented, and alone knew how to control, the discipline of the Presbyterians was as repugnant as the order of episcopal government. He and his followers of course sided with the Independents, many of whom must be cleared from all participation in his fanatical principles, though they shared the favour of his protection and government. It was impossible that the Presbyterians and Independents should agree, or coalesce in each other's measures, any more than the strict Episcopalians could agree with the measures of either, for all three now insisted that there was a certain form of church government set down in the New Testament, which was of Divine institution, binding in all ages. The Erastians, by their principles, could admit of the establishment of any of the three forms, or any modification of the three, as they held that no particular form of government had a Divine institution, but that the civil magistrate might adopt what ecclesiastical government he thought best calculated for the times and circumstances of the nation.

In the assembly of Westminster divines indeed, the presbyterian government was voted of Divine appointment, by a very great majority ; which marks a great alteration of sentiment under Scottish instruction, for most of them had been conformists to the episcopal establishment. The Independents, on this occasion, complain of the unkind usage they met with in the assembly ; “ that the papers they offered were not read ;” “ that they were not allowed to state their own questions,” being told “ they set themselves industriously to puzzle the cause, and render the clearest propositions obscure, rather than argue the truth or falseness of them ;” “ that it was not worth the assembly's while to spend so much time in debating with so inconsiderable a number of men.” They also declared, “ that the assembly refused to debate their main proposition, viz. whether a Divine right of church government did not remain with every particular congregation ?”

The Erastians, however, being supported by the Independents in the house of commons, in opposing the establishment of presbyterianism as of Divine right, procured a vote that the proposition of the assembly should stand thus : “ That it is law-



ful, and agreeable to the Word of God, that the church be governed by congregational, classical, and synodical assemblies." This was felt as a defeat by the Presbyterians. "The disappointment of the Scottish commissioners and their friends at the loss of this question in the house, is not to be expressed; they alarmed the citizens with the danger of the church, and prevailed upon the common council and the London clergy to petition; but to no purpose. This laid the foundation of jealousy and misunderstanding between the city and the parliament. A still fiercer contention arose about the power of the keys. The assembly would have assigned it to the eldership or presbytery, "as of Divine appointment;" the Independents claimed a like power for "the brotherhood" of every particular congregation, but without any civil sanctions or penalties annexed; the Erastians were for laying the communion open, and referring all crimes to the civil magistrates<sup>1</sup>.

The parliament compromised the matter, by granting the power of excommunication in cases specified, but reserved in all cases the right of a final appeal to themselves, and also in all the decisions of the ecclesiastical assemblies; so that, to the great scandal of their Scottish brethren, they were resolved at last to retain their supremacy over the church<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> The learned Mr. Selden, on this occasion, delivered his opinion in the house of commons, against all suspensions and excommunications, to this effect: "That for four thousand years, there was no law to suspend persons from religious exercises; strangers were indeed kept from the passover, but they were pagans, and not of the Jewish religion. The question is not now for keeping away pagans in times of Christianity, but Protestants from Protestant worship. No divine can shew that there is any such command as this to suspend from the sacrament. No man is kept from the sacrament, *eo nomine*, because he is guilty of any sin, by the constitution of the reformed churches, or because he has not made satisfaction. Every man is a sinner; the difference is only that the one is in private, and the other in public.—'Tell it to the church'—in St. Matthew—referred to the courts of law which then sat at Jerusalem. No man can shew any excommunication till the popes Victor and Zephorinus, two hundred years after Christ, first began to use them upon private quarrels: whereby it appears, that excommunication is a human invention taken from the heathen." Mr. Whitlocke followed on the same side. He said, "Scandalous sinners should be admonished to forsake their evil ways, and amend their lives; and how can this be done better than by allowing them to hear good sermons and partake of the holy ordinance?" "I have heard complaints of the jurisdiction of the prelates, who were but few; now in this ordinance there will be a great multiplication of spiritual men in government; but I am of opinion that where the temporal sword is sufficient for the punishment of offences, there will be no need of this new discipline."

<sup>2</sup> The Independents, finding themselves excluded, applied for the following.

Many petitions from the Presbyterians, both in town and country, declared in very strong language against any toleration: "The whole nation of Scotland demanded the honourable houses would never admit a toleration of any sect or schisms contrary to their solemn league and covenant." They say, "there was a party in England who were endeavouring to supplant true religion by pleading for liberty of conscience, which is the nourisher of all heresies and schisms." The Independents themselves only pleaded for a toleration of those who agreed in the fundamentals of Christianity. But there were not wanting, in that day, some who argued for the universal right of liberty of conscience and toleration, upon those principles which are now very generally admitted to be as politic as they are just. How little improvement, indeed, had been made in ecclesiastical government by setting aside the king and the bishops, appears from an order of the house, in 1645, for punishing with death Paul Best, for denying the Holy Trinity.

indulgence: 1. "That their congregations might have the power of ordination within themselves." 2. "That they might not be brought under the power of classes, nor forced to communicate in those parish churches where they dwelt; but that they might have liberty to join with such congregations as they prefer, and that such congregations may have power of church censures within themselves, subject only to parliament, and be as so many exempt and privileged places."

The Presbyterians replied: 1. "That this implied a total separation from the established rule." 2. "The lawfulness of gathering churches out of other true churches. Lastly, It would countenance a perpetual schism, and introduce all manner of confusion into families." They argued against the lawfulness of a separation, "That if a pretence of conscience be a sufficient ground of separation, men may gather impure and corrupt churches out of purer, because upon the dictate of an erring conscience they may disallow that which is pure, and set up that which is agreeable to their erring consciences; and we very much doubt whether tenderness of conscience in doubtful points will justify a separation; it may oblige men to forbear communion, but not to set up a contrary practice."

"If a church impose any thing that is sinful, we must forbear to comply, yet without separation; as was the practice of the Puritans in the late times." "As for such toleration as our brethren desire, we apprehend it will open the door to all sects; and though the Independents now plead for it, their brethren in New England do not allow it." "Our brethren desire to set up separate communions, which is a manifest rupture of our societies into others, and is therefore a schism in the body." "This is setting up altar against altar, allowing our churches, as the Independents do, to be true churches." "This indulgence, if granted, will be the mother of all contentions, strifes, heresies, and confusions in the church; and contrary to their covenant, which obliges them to endeavour to their utmost a uniformity." "That whereas their brethren say, that uniformity

The king's armies had now been defeated and dispersed in all quarters and Charles had surrendered himself to the Scotch army on the fifth of May, 1646, which put an end to the first civil war. This, however, was but a prelude to the rising of the victorious army against their impotent masters; though the possession of his majesty's person by their Scottish brethren, gave the Presbyterians a momentary reputation of power. They brought forward, on this occasion, the lord mayor and corporation of London, to complain that "the reins of discipline were let loose; that particular congregations were allowed to take up what form of Divine service they pleased, and that sectaries began to swarm." "They reminded the parliament that their covenant obliged them to "endeavour the extirpation of popery, prelacy, superstition, heresy, schism, profaneness," &c. They encouraged the assembly of divines "to proceed in their zeal against sectaries, and to stand boldly for the sceptre of Jesus Christ against the encroachments of earthly powers."

The interest of the Independents and of the various sectaries in the army, and their counter-petitions, kept all in suspense. The presbyterian scheme could not be put in practice, but for a very short period, in the city of London and in Lancashire. The ancient episcopal church of England was now reduced to a low ebb, though many were secretly attached to it, and its assemblies still met by stealth. The king, in the midst of his misfortunes, held himself bound by his coronation oath, to support and maintain it, as by law established. He declared it as his opinion, "that the votes of the two houses were not sufficient to absolve him from his oath, without the representative body of the clergy. And this seems to be strictly just, because, if the convocation, in which the laity had no representatives, did not, without the parliament, represent the church, the parliament, where the clergy had no representatives according to the then constitution of the church of England, could not, without the convocation, be considered as its representatives. Could their captive king have consented to acknowledge the divine right of presbyterianism, the Scotch evidently would have espoused his cause.

But Charles declared to Henderson, whom the general as-

ought to be urged no further than is agreeable to all men's consciences and to their edification, it seems to them as if their brethren not only desired liberty of conscience for themselves, but for all men." "What then," they ask, "will become of their covenant?"

sembly had commissioned to dispute with him, "that he esteemed the English reformation, because it was effected without tumult; and was conducted by those who ought to have the conduct of such an affair. He apprehended they kept close to apostolical appointment and the universal custom of the primitive church; and therefore the adhering to episcopacy must be of the last importance, as with it the priesthood must sink, and the sacraments be administered without effect; for these reasons he conceived episcopacy to be necessary to the being of a church." When it was urged by Henderson, that this was to "deny the lawfulness of the ministry and the administration of the sacraments in those reformed churches where there were no diocesan bishops," his reply was, "that he did not undertake to censure these churches, but supposed necessity might excuse many things which would otherwise be unlawful. The church of England, in his judgment, had this advantage, that it comes nearest the primitive doctrine and discipline."

According to his majesty's judgment, therefore, episcopacy, as it stood in the succession of that character from the apostles, was requisite, where it could be had, to the structure of a church; but he does not deny the lawfulness of their administrations, who, from necessity, were deprived of it, as would be the case of private ministers and of the people in those churches whose founders had laid aside the office. His answer respecting the administration of the sacraments, was certainly conclusive as to the Presbyterians; that Mr. Henderson "would not deny a lawfully ordained presbyter's being necessary to that office;" so that it depended upon another question, "whether presbyters without the bishop might ordain other presbyters."

The Scots finding themselves unable to prevail upon the king to take their covenant, delivered him up to the English parliament, on the payment of a large sum of money for arrears. About this time, the parliament proceeded to complete the abolition of episcopacy, and to confiscate the church property for the use of the state. The Presbyterians got possession of the best, if not of all the livings in the kingdom. Disorder was every where spreading, not only over the whole country, but in the city of London itself, where the Presbyterian interest was the strongest. The pulpits were often usurped by preaching soldiers, who infected all the places to which they came, with dangerous errors. "It was first pleaded in excuse for this practice, that 'a gifted brother' had better preach and pray to the people, than nobody; but now learning began to be cried down, and every

bold pretender to inspiration was preferred to the most grave and sober divines of the age. Some advanced themselves into the rank of prophets; and others uttered all such crude and undigested absurdities as came first into their minds, calling them the dictates of the Spirit within them; by which the public peace was frequently disturbed, and great numbers of ignorant people led into the belief of the most dangerous errors<sup>1</sup>."

It was in the victorious army, which was soon to overthrow the government of the Presbyterians, that this spirit was chiefly nurtured. Mr. Baxter, who attended it, mentions the chief separatists there as Independents, Anabaptists, and Antinomians, to which list he adds some other names, as Seekers, Ranters, Behemetists, Vanists; all which died in their infancy, or were united to the people afterwards known by the name of Quakers. "A few fiery, self-conceited men among them kindled the rest, and made all the noise and bustle; for the greatest part of the soldiers were ignorant men, and of little religion; these would do any thing to please their officers, and were instruments for the seducers in their great work, which was to cry down the covenant, to vilify parish ministers, and especially the Scots and Presbyterians." "These fiery-hot men were hatched among the old separatists; they were fierce with pride and conceit, and uncharitableness; but some of the honest soldiers who were only tainted with some doubts about liberty of conscience and independency, would discourse of the points of sanctification and Christian experience very savourily. The seducers above-mentioned were great preachers and fierce disputants, but of no settled principles in religion. Some were of levelling principles, as to the state; but all were agreed that the civil magistrate had nothing to do in matters of religion, any further than to keep the peace, and to protect the church liberties." "To speak impartially, some of the Presbyterian ministers frightened the sectaries into this fury, by the unpeaceableness and impatience of their minds: they ran from libertinism into the other extreme, and were so little sensible of their own infirmity, that they would not have them tolerated, who were not only tolerable, but worthy instruments and members in the churches<sup>2</sup>."

Cromwell and his officers were the great patrons of the sectaries; they "prayed and preached publicly with their troops, and admitted few or no chaplains, in the army, except such as bitterly inveighed against the Presbyterian government as more

<sup>1</sup> Neale.

<sup>2</sup> Baxter's Life.

tyrannical than episcopacy; the common soldiers, as well as the officers, did not only pray and preach themselves, but went up into the pulpits in all churches, and preached to the people, who quickly became inspired with the same spirit, women as well as men taking upon them to pray and preach<sup>1</sup>." The Roman Jesuits took advantage of these confusions, and had their emissaries in all parties, disguised as artificers or soldiers, and practised to oppose each other as Presbyterians, or Independents, or Anabaptists, or whatever other sectaries<sup>2</sup>. Both church and state were in the utmost confusion at the close of the year 1646<sup>3</sup>. It was in vain that the presbytery of London proclaimed to the nation "their great dislike of prelacy, Erastianism, Brownism, and independency, and their utter abhorrence of anti-scripturism, popery, Arianism, antinomianism, anabaptism, libertinism, and familism;"—"and that they detested the 'toleration' so much pursued and endeavoured in the kingdom, accounting it unlawful and pernicious."

The army demanded toleration, and soon took possession of the sovereign authority, when they disposed all things according to their own pleasure. They first seized upon the king's person, and next upon the city of London; and having the parliament in their hands, they proceeded, in the most arbitrary manner, to turn out all the members who were opposed to their interests. Not being able to manage the king to their mind, or, as some represent it, their leaders thinking he was not to be trusted in his personal engagements to them, the artful Cromwell pronounced "that God had hardened his heart." He brought the remnant of the parliament to pass a vote of "no more addresses to the king." "Till this very time," Lord Clarendon remarks, "no man mentioned the king's person without duty and respect. But now, a new scene was opened, and some of the officers at their meetings at Windsor, began to talk of deposing the king, or prosecuting him as a criminal!"

The army was withdrawn for a short period, in the second civil war, raised chiefly by the Scotch Presbyterians; but no sooner had they returned victorious, than they began to pursue their traitorous intention. That they might inflame the enthusiasm of the soldiers, in order "to smite with the fist of wickedness," as was usual, the officers appointed several days of fasting at their head-quarters at St. Albans. They remonstrated with

<sup>1</sup> Lord Clarendon. <sup>2</sup> Bishop Brumhall's Letter to Archbishop Usher.—PARR.  
<sup>3</sup> Neale.



the parliament for having again treated with the king; they sent again to seize his majesty's person in the Isle of Wight, while they quartered the army round the parliament at Westminster, and again they purged the house of all members whom they despaired of being able to bring to comply with their nefarious scheme, that of murdering the king by the prostituted ceremonies of justice. Lieutenant-general Cromwell proceeded to the parliament. He was the soul of the army, the general Fairfax being his dupe, or but a cipher in his hand. But even in this packed assembly, the proposal was heard by some with horror! Some dared to exclaim that "there was no law to try the king, nor any judicature to call him to account." Cromwell, with impious hypocrisy, affected to be in doubt, or rather to attribute the motion to a divine impulse. "If any man," he said, "moved this of choice, or design, he should think him the greatest traitor in the world; but since providence, or necessity had cast them upon it, he should pray God to bless their counsels, though he was not provided on a sudden to give advice." The carrying of the motion was before secured. The remaining members of the upper house, indeed, rejected the ordinance; but this was a small obstacle, for their house was voted "useless," by the commons. The general voice of the nation was clearly against the violence; but nothing could arrest the "wicked hands" of the fanatics who had the army at command. The officers had sent their chaplain, Hugh Peters, to bring over the Presbyterian ministers to their measures; but they all subscribed a serious remonstrance to the general and his council, in which they say, "you cannot but know, that the word of God commands obedience to magistrates; and consonant to scripture this has been the judgment of Protestant divines at home and abroad, with whom we concur; disclaiming, detesting, and abhorring the practices of Jesuits, concerning the opposing of lawful magistrates by any private persons, and the murdering of kings by any, though under the most specious and colourable pretences." They warn them "not to infer the justice of their proceedings from their success;" that necessity can oblige no man to sin or to perjure himself, "nor is it safe to be guided by the impulses of the spirit, when they are contrary to the written word of God," &c. The Independent ministers did not join in this remonstrance, because they did not belong to the body of the London divines. Some few, it is to be feared, approved the horrid deed; but Mr. Neale says, that he knew but of two, Hugh Peters and John Goodwin, who declared their

approbation of it. The former was one of the most insane fanatics any where recorded in history; the latter added to somewhat of that character, a violent zeal for the propagation of Arminian doctrine. The candid judgment of posterity, has generally acquitted Presbyterians and Independents, and indeed any other religious sect, as such, of the guilt of the murder of their sovereign. Bishop Warburton describes the perpetrators as a third party, rising out of the ferment of the self-denying ordinance; a swarm of armed enthusiasts who outwitted the Patriots, outprayed the Puritans, and outfought the Cavaliers.

From the king's death in 1649, to the year 1653, the members of the commons whom the pleasure of the army had left in that house under their protection, governed the nation under the title of the Commonwealth of England. Cromwell, as their general, executed a severe vengeance on the Papists of Ireland, for the massacre of the Protestants. He carried his arms into Scotland, which had declared for the young king, after having forced him to take their covenant. Cromwell not only defeated them, but took their capital, where he came into contact with those stern covenanting ministers, with whom the resistance against the late king had sprung. They detested Cromwell as the encourager of sectaries, and the persecutor of their brethren in England. At his approach, they took shelter in the castle, and refused to return to their posts. Cromwell, in his correspondence with them, denied the charge of persecuting the ministers of Christ. He said, "They are supported, and have liberty to preach the Gospel, though not to rail at their superiors at discretion; nor, under a pretended privilege of character, to overtop the civil powers, or debase them as they please;" than which no words could better delineate the character of these ministers. In reply to their charge, that he had opened the pulpit doors to all intruders, he answered, "Where do you find in scripture that preaching is included within your function? Though an approbation from men has order in it, and may be well, yet he that hath not a better than that, hath none at all." "Are you envious that Eldad and Medad prophesy?" "You know who has bid us covet that we may prophesy; which the apostle explains to be a speaking to instruction, edification, and comfort, which the instructed, edified, and comforted, can best tell the energy and effect of." "Are ye troubled that Christ is preached? Does it scandalise the reformed churches, and Scotland in particular? Is it against the covenant? Away

with the covenant, if it be so." These remarks exhibit the view which Cromwell and his party took of the ministerial office.

Cromwell laid great stress upon his success against them, after both parties had made a solemn appeal to God. They had answered: "We have not so learned Christ, as to hang the equity of a cause on events." He replies: "We could wish that blindness had not been upon your eyes to those marvellous dispensations which God has lately wrought in England. But did not you solemnly appeal and pray? Did not we do so, too? And ought not we and you to think with fear and trembling on the hand of the great God, in this mighty and strange appearance of his, and not slightly call it an *event*? Were not your expectations and ours renewed from time to time, while we waited upon God to see how he would manifest himself upon our appeals? And shall we, after all these our prayers, fastings, tears, expectations, and solemn appeals, call them bare *events*? The Lord pity you!" Whether we have here the manifestation of a superstitious mind, hardened by success in its schemes of ambition, or of the crafty politician, dexterously availing himself of the weakness of his fellow-creatures, in order to govern them through their own predominant dispositions, it equally affords a specimen of the religious sentiment of the times.

The Independents were now the governing party in England; for, though the Presbyterians were not generally dispossessed, and were still the most numerous, they were fallen into discredit; and by the substitution of "the engagement,"—"to be true to the present government without king, or house of lords,"—instead of the "covenant," many of them were dislodged from situations of the first importance. By degrees, the Presbyterians lost their influence in the universities, and delivered them up into the hands of the Independents, who placed two of their most eminent divines, Dr. John Owen, and Dr. Thomas Goodwin, in the university of Oxford.

The supremacy of the Independents continued from the rising of the army in 1648, during the commonwealth and the actual protectorate of Oliver Cromwell, for he was all the time master of the government, till his death in 1658. For toleration and liberty of conscience, the Independents and other sectaries had contended against the Presbyterians; but, as far as they could influence the politic Cromwell, this toleration and liberty had their limits. By his instrument of government, "all who professed faith in God by Jesus Christ, were to be protected in their religion. This was interpreted to imply an agreement in funda-

mentals<sup>1</sup>. But for political reasons — the usual plea of all persecuting governments — not only Papists, but the Episcopal church of England, were debarred from the public exercise of their devotions, under severe penalties: persons who were convicted of “frequently using the Common Prayer-book, were classed with ‘profane scoffers,’ and ‘encouragers of licentious practices.’” The Protector himself, however, on some occasions, was more lenient than his parliament; the preaching of the Episcopal clergy was connived at; “several bishops, who had been kept from public service by the ‘covenant’ and ‘engagement,’ preached again publicly in the city, as archbishop Usher, bishop Brownrigg, and others.” The Protector seems to have been desirous, by artful management, to quiet all parties, in order to strengthen his own authority. But he kept a watchful eye over all, and was ready, by the strong hand of power, to keep down all that threatened the security of his government. He could join with the enthusiasts of the army in their inspired raptures, prayers, and sermons; but when this spirit was no

<sup>1</sup> The most eminent divines, chiefly Independents, were appointed to draw up these fundamentals. They were as follows: 1st, That Holy Scripture is that rule of knowing God and living unto him, which whoso doth not believe, cannot be saved: 2dly, That there is a God, who is the Creator, Governor, and Judge of the world, which is to be received by faith, and every other way of the knowledge of him is insufficient: 3dly, That this God who is the Creator, is eternally distinct from all creatures, in his beginning and blessedness: 4thly, That this God is one in three persons or subsistences: 5thly, That Jesus Christ is the only Mediator between God and man, without the knowledge of whom there is no salvation: 6thly, That this Jesus Christ is the true God: 7thly, That Jesus Christ is also true man: 8thly, That this Jesus Christ is God and man in one person: 9thly, That this Jesus Christ is our Redeemer, who, by paying a ransom, and bearing our sins, has made satisfaction for them: 10thly, That this same Jesus Christ is he that was crucified at Jerusalem, and rose again and ascended into heaven: 11thly, That this same Jesus Christ, being the only God, and man in one person, remains for ever a distinct person from all saints and angels, notwithstanding their union and communion with him: 12thly, That all men by nature are dead in sins and trespasses, and no man can be saved unless he be born again, repent and believe: 13thly, That we are justified and saved by grace and faith in Jesus Christ, and not by works: 14thly, That to continue in any known sin, upon what pretence or principle soever, is damnable: 15thly, That God is to be worshipped according to his own will; and whosoever shall forsake and despise all the duties of his worship cannot be saved: 16thly, That the dead shall rise; and that there is a day of judgment, wherein all shall appear, some to go into everlasting life, and some into everlasting condemnation.

Mr. Baxter, who was present, says: “Dr. Owen worded these articles; Dr. Goodwin, Mr. Nye, and Simpson, were his assistants; Dr. Cheynel was scribe; Mr. Marshall did something; the rest were little better than passive.”

longer subservient, as in the case of the fifth-monarchist, he could surround them, and cut them in pieces. Notwithstanding his apology to the presbyters of Scotland, for the preaching of the gifted brethren, he could boast to his parliament that his government "had put a stop to that heady way, for every man that will to make himself a preacher, by settling a way for approbation of men of piety and fitness for this work." Though much of that revolution to which he owed his rise to power, had been brought about by the zealous interference of the teachers of religion, he felt and owned its impropriety, and absolutely forbade the clergy of every denomination "dealing in politics, as not belonging to their profession." And when the managing Presbyterians took too much upon them, he always found means to mortify them, and would sometimes glory that he had curbed that insolent sect that would suffer none but itself. Their monthly fast, which had truly been "for strife and debate," and was the grand occasion of political prayers and sermons, and for the censure of public measures which they disapproved, was abrogated.

"The Protector's most determined adversaries were the commonwealth party. These were divided into two branches. One had little or no religion, but were for a democracy in the state, and universal liberty of conscience in religion. The heads of this party were deists, or, in the language of the Protector, heathens; as Algernon Sidney, Henry Neville, Martin, Wildman, and Harrington. It was impossible to work upon these men, or reconcile them to the government of a single person, and therefore he disarmed them of their power. The other were high enthusiasts and fifth-monarchy-men, who were in expectation of king Jesus, and of the glorious reign of Christ upon earth. They were for pulling down the churches, says bishop Burnet, for discharging tythes, and leaving religion free, as they called it, without either encouragement or restraint. Most of them were for destroying the clergy, and for breaking every thing that looked like a national establishment. These, "some of them his old friends," the Protector endeavoured to gain, by assuring them in private conversation, "that he had no manner of inclination to assume the government, but would rather have been content with a shepherd's staff, were it not absolutely necessary to keep the nation from falling to pieces, and becoming a prey to the common enemy; that he only stepped in between the living and the dead, and this only till God should direct them on what bottom to settle, when he would surrender his

dignity with a joy equal to the sorrow with which he had taken it up." With the chiefs of this party he affected to converse upon terms of great familiarity, shutting the door, and making them sit down covered in his presence. He talked to them in their own language, and the conversation commonly ended with a long prayer<sup>1</sup>.

In these times of confusion arose another religious sect, of a peculiar description, which has continued to our own times, and into which, according to some authors, most of the harmless enthusiasts, who had previously gone by other names, coalesced. These were the Quakers. This sect originated with a person of the name of George Fox, who had been apprenticed to a shoemaker; but, being led by what he esteemed to be inspiration, he forsook all regular employment, and, clad in a leathern doublet, wandered up and down the country in a solitary manner. He fasted much, and often walked abroad in retired places, with no other companion than his Bible. He would sometimes sit in a hollow tree all day, and frequently walk about the fields in the night like a man possessed with a deep melancholy, which the historian of the Quakers<sup>2</sup> calls "the time of the first working of the Lord upon him." He had discontinued all attendance upon the public worship of the churches, "because," he said, "it was revealed to him, that a learned education at the university was no qualification for a minister, but that all depended upon the anointing of the Spirit, and that God who made the world, did not dwell in temples made with hands." He conceived, also, that the Lord had forbid him to put off his hat to any one, high or low; and that, without distinction, he was directed to address every body with *thee* and *thou*. He was neither to give nor accept any titles of respect or honour, nor use the customary salutation of "good morrow," or "good night;" nor on any occasion whatever to take an oath. All these peculiarities were afterwards adopted by his followers. Their name of Quakers is said by some to have originated from their convulsive quiverings when they addressed the people; or, according to others, from the circumstance of George Fox's calling upon the magistrate before whom he was brought, to "tremble at the word of the Lord." He began to attract the public notice more particularly about the years 1648 and 1649, and had many followers, both men and women, who imbibed his spirit, and imitated his conduct.

<sup>1</sup> Neale.<sup>2</sup> Sewel.



Although he had declined attendance on the worship of the churches, he took the liberty to frequent them in common with other places of concourse, sometimes to the disturbance of the congregation, in order to deliver his inspired messages. This often brought him into trouble, and which his refusal of every customary token of respect, when carried before the magistrates, increased. But the patient endurance of evil was one of the maxims of the founder of the Quakers. And though it cannot be objected against the magistrates of those days, that they inflicted the penalties of the laws on the disturbers of public worship, yet, in attending to the accounts of the sufferings of the Quakers at this period, we cannot but perceive, that justice was administered with no more lenity or respect for misguided consciences, under the magistrates of the Independent persuasion, than in the times of the king and prelates so much complained of; which is the more inexcusable, as the Quakers, except on the point of their enthusiasm, were perfectly harmless, and their opinions had no connexion with any political party.

But the Quakers were exempted from toleration by the Independents, as antiscriturists. Fox had, early in his career, interrupted a minister in his public discourse. Having directed his audience to try all doctrine, opinions, and religions by the Holy Scripture, “ Fox stood up and said: ‘ Oh no! it is not the Scripture, but it is the Holy Spirit by which opinions and religions are to be tried; for it was the Spirit that led the people into all truth, and gave them the knowledge of it.’ ” It might be supposed, from so uncertain a criterion of truth, as the supposed inspiration of the individual, that the opinions held by this sect would be various. This appears, from authors who saw them in their infancy, to have been the case; but afterwards, when they were associated and formed into a sect, by the skill of their managers, their opinions became more uniform. They were in time found to be an Arminian or a Semi-Pelagian sect,\* distinguished

\* Respecting grace or divine influence, for which their “ inward light ” was but another name, they held: “ that this light enlighteneth all in a day, — or for a time, in order to salvation, if not resisted. Nor is it less universal than the seed of sin, being the purchase of his death who tasted death for every man.” They chiefly blame the Arminians, for not placing the extent of salvation in this principle of light and life; and for making an outward knowledge of revelation necessary; whereas, they say, “ where this knowledge is not to be had, men may be made partakers of the mystery of Christ’s death, if they suffer his seed and light, enlightening their hearts, to take place, in which light, communion with the Father and the Son is enjoyed, so as for wicked men to become holy and lovers of that power, by whose inward and secret touches, they feel themselves turned from

by their singular notions respecting the motions of the Spirit; by their ascribing an inferior authority only to the Scriptures; by their laying aside the ministry and sacraments; and adopting most of the peculiarities of their founder Fox.

The protector Cromwell died Sept. 3, 1658. His powerful hand being removed, order could no longer be maintained in the revolutionary government. The clashing of all the different interests and parties was immediately heard, and worse confusions were threatened. The power of the Independents and Anabaptists fell to pieces with Cromwell's army, whose force no one, after Oliver's death, was found sufficient to combine and wield with effect. A countervailing military power arose under Monk, the general who commanded in Scotland, and who seemed to unite himself with the Presbyterian interest.

But the nation was at length wearied, and disgusted with this trifling with the sovereign authority; and there being no party now sufficiently powerful to suppress the voice of public opinion, it was soon heard to cry aloud for the restoration of the ancient government in church and state. The Presbyterians would have yielded upon conditions, and they complain of being deceived by various promises and assurances of the Episcopalians.

evil to good," &c. "As many as resist not this light, but receive the same, in them is produced a holy, pure, and spiritual birth, bringing forth holiness, righteousness, purity, and all other blessed fruits which are acceptable to God, by which holy birth,—to wit, Jesus Christ—formed within us, and working his works within us—as we are sanctified, so are we justified in the sight of God." &c. So that, according to this statement, they do not hold the great distinguishing doctrine of protestantism, "justification by faith." On the article of justification they are plainly with the Papists. They admit the possibility of attaining to a sinless perfection, but not to an impossibility of sinning. "The Scriptures," they say, "are only a declaration of the fountain, and not the fountain itself; they are not to be esteemed the principal ground of all truth and knowledge, nor yet the adequate primary rule of faith and manners. Nevertheless, as that which giveth a true and faithful testimony of the first foundation, they are and may be esteemed a secondary rule, subordinate to the Spirit, from which they have all their excellency and certainty; for as by the inward testimony of the Spirit, we do alone truly know them, so they testify, that the Spirit is that guide by which the saints are led into all truth; and therefore according to Scripture, the Spirit is the first and principal leader. And seeing we do *therefore* receive and believe the Scriptures because they proceeded from the Spirit; therefore also the Spirit is more originally and principally the rule, according to the received maxim of the schools,—“That for which a thing is such, that thing itself is more such.” Which doctrine very much resembles the papistical notions of Scripture and inspiration; with this difference, that the inspiration which the Papists only ascribe to the solemn decisions of the pope, or of a general council, the Quakers ascribe to every man and woman.

But, in fact, public opinion having once found vent, began to rush forth in one direction with a force not to be diverted. Of the old officers of Cromwell's army, the strength of the Independents, it is observed that "hardly a gentleman of estate or interest in his country, would stand by them." "The Scots kirk stood to their principles, and would have bid defiance to the old clergy; but Mr. Calamy, Manton and Ash"—chief men among their brethren in England, "informed them in the name of the London ministers, that the general stream and current being for the old prelacy, in its pomp and height, it was in vain to hope for establishing presbytery; which made them lay aside the thoughts of it, and fly to archbishop Usher's moderate episcopacy.<sup>1</sup>" Monk rather fell in with this current, than directed it. The new parliament came to a vote, "that according to the ancient constitution, the government of this kingdom is, and ought to be, in king, lords, and commons." "From this period," observes lord Clarendon, "there was such an emulation and impatience in both houses of parliament, in the city, and in the country, who should make the most lively expressions of their duty and their joy, that a man could not but wonder where those people dwelt who had done all the mischief, and kept the king so many years from enjoying the comfort and support of such excellent subjects."

This generosity and confidence of the English nation was but ill requited by the restored family. The king himself, as far as he could be said to have any religion, was a concealed Papist; his presumptive heir, the duke of York, afterwards James II., was soon avowedly one, and the troubles of the British nations were far from being at an end. The Jesuit politics of the court were not the worst evil; the nation possessed spirit enough, and a sufficient degree of hatred against popery, to counteract this. But the profligacy and debauchery which Charles II. and his court brought with them from the continent, had the effect of demoralising the English nation to a most extraordinary degree. It must be admitted, that the reign of the Presbyterians and Independents, after the destruction of that venerable church establishment, which our reformers had left us, had disposed the public mind to receive this contagion. They had destroyed the ancient order and authority of religion, for which all their zeal and enthusiasm could not supply a lasting substitute; and though many powerful minds were called into exercise, and had full scope for their exertions, in this revolutionary state of church government, yet the ho-

<sup>1</sup> Neale.

nour of religion, and sometimes its purity suffered by its real or suspected subserviency to secular ambition. And if in some stations we see the tree of religious knowledge, as in a high state of cultivation, flourishing with unusual exuberancy, never was there an age so prolific in error and heresy! Almost every perversion of revealed truth, that ingenuity can possibly devise, was presented to the public, and cherished by some party or other. The minds of the poor and simple were sadly beguiled. A religious enthusiasm, amounting almost to frenzy, was kindled in the nation. When that should subside, it could not but happen, that religion would be found weakened by its divisions, that general confidence in its decisions would have been destroyed by the multitude of its empirical teachers, so that it would be seen no longer to command the respect of the unthinking, always the most numerous part of mankind, and whose attachment to religion is seldom to be regarded higher than a useful prejudice. While this state of things lasted, the public mind may be considered as in an unnatural state of religious excitement.

With respect to the regulation of public morals, enthusiasm, in these circumstances, could, indeed, command obedience; and, as each party which aimed at pre-eminence, affected to sanctify its cause by zeal for religion, they vied with each other to produce this effect. Never was there so much legislation for the suppression of vice, and never were the laws more rigorously exerted. Public opinion went with these regulations. Drunkenness, debauchery, and profane swearing, were rendered infamous, and every species of dishonest extravagancy. All kinds of games, stage plays, and abuses of public houses, were carefully suppressed. The Lord's day was observed with unusual reverence. Had all this been produced by lasting causes, under a lawful civil government, and a well ordered ecclesiastical ministry, the effects so far would have been most blessed. But the light of religion which produced this moral improvement, was not diffused from the luminaries of heaven in their orderly evolutions, but was the blaze of a meteor soon to be extinguished in darkness. No doubt there was a great deal of true as well as false religion at this time in the nation; but it was a mistake to suppose, that when "all England turned puritan," in opposition and contradiction to an oppressive and misguided government, that it was all for the love of purity in religion and manners. Much was done 'through emulation,' and for the sake of advantage; the lusts of men were laid under a visible restraint; and if hypocrisy is the homage paid to virtue, never — if we except political crimes — did virtue receive so much homage from

mankind. One generation indeed had passed away, and many whose religious zeal had helped to begin the war, and were encouraged, perhaps, by the first flattering appearances, to proceed in their rebellion beyond almost every pretension of right and justice, lived to see the evils to which the overthrow of that religious establishment, which might have been purified from its abuses, was ultimately to lead.

But it was most unhappy for these kingdoms,—separate from every consideration of politics,—that the temptations to evil, which should try, and bring to the test, this supposed religious improvement of the people of England, and prove it false and delusive, should be brought back by the restoration of its legitimate government, and the descendant of her ancient monarchs. A general dissoluteness of manners followed the restoration, which was seen to commence almost with the rejoicings for the king's return. Vice seemed to burst from its restraints, and to recompense itself in unbounded licentiousness, for its former sacrifices. The signal indeed was given from the throne! and by an extraordinary association, profligacy, and even affected profligacy, became the pledge of loyalty, and none were seen to carry it further, than some who had been trained in all the rigid morality and fanatic zeal of the former times, as though they had a stigma to wipe off in order to their pursuing a new path of ambition.

The king added to a remarkable urbanity of manners and winning address, a most debauched character, and devoted himself entirely to his pleasures, giving himself up to an avowed course of lewdness. His court was a scene of riotous excess, continual revelling and drunkenness, the most insidious seduction, or open obscenity. Religion became the butt of ridicule and profane wit. All strictness of moral deportment was laughed at, and even suspected, as a badge of another party. The contagion quickly contaminated the nobility and gentry; nor, unless they are much calumniated, did the clergy escape. All who aspired to the favour of the king soon took the prevailing tone of manners, and the infection spread, by degrees, through all ranks of the people. Writers of all classes agree in pointing out the theatres as restored by Charles, as one source of corruption. The introduction of women as actresses, was a new thing in England, but the plays performed were most immoral and obscene. This suited the taste of the king, and here was one of the most frequent exhibitions of his majesty to his people.

The spirit of the English church has wished to consecrate

the monarch, by an imputation of a certain sanctity of character in virtue of his office as the supreme minister of God, to maintain truth and administer justice. And this is, indeed, one of his greatest safeguards in the legitimate exercise of his authority, and seems to be that which the Christian Scriptures particularly countenance. If so, indeed, the religious professors of the late times had strangely violated this maxim ! But now it was to be exposed to new contempt, by the personal character of the prince. Some few might separate, in their idea, the office from the person of the king ; but when he so far forgot his character, it would have been strange indeed, if his friends could have procured for him or for his office, in the eyes of the multitude, much religious veneration by the loud exclamations of “ sacred majesty,” or “ the Lord’s anointed.” It was likely rather to discredit still more the sanctity of the kingly office, and, in fact, it has done so.

With the king the ancient episcopal church was restored of course. All that had been done in favour of the Presbyterians, not having had the royal assent, was void in law ; and by consequence, all the sales and alienation of the church property were null, and the property reverted to its lawful owners. The nine bishops who had survived the late troubles, with the remaining clergy, resumed their stations. The new bishops and dignitaries were chiefly taken from those who had been faithful to the royal cause and to the church, in the late season of its depression and persecution, which certainly gave a pledge of some worth of character ; though it was complained, that some clergymen, who had been dispossessed, not on political grounds, but for scandalous conduct and insufficiency, were admitted without discrimination, to the great discredit of the church and its ministry. Juxon, bishop of London, as the most eminent among the surviving bishops, was promoted to the see of Canterbury ; but he was now superannuated, and the chief direction fell upon Dr. Sheldon, who succeeded him in both his sees. The character given to this latter prelate by bishop Burnet, is very unfavourable, and is not contradicted by his conduct. “ He seemed not to have a deep sense of religion, if any at all ; and spoke of it most commonly as an engine of government, and matter of policy, for which reason, the king looked upon him as a wise and honest clergyman.”

The royal declarations had, at first, breathed great moderation, and many lovers of peace had hoped, that by some indulgence to individuals, and a few general concessions which would not have impaired or weakened the system of the established church,



the greater part of the more moderate Presbyterians might have been reconciled to its government ; and that such a limited toleration might be allowed as would neither endanger the peace of the kingdom, nor admit, under its pretence, the common enemy, the Papists, to creep in.

These hopes, however, were not realised, and the blame has been laid by each party on the other ; indifferent judges, at the same time, have shared it between them. As the Presbyterians, in the season of their prosperity, had risen in their demands, so now the Episcopalians became more peremptory in preserving their government entire. They were accused also of acting with vindictive feelings for the many injuries which they had received at the hands of the sectaries and Presbyterians. On the other hand, the Presbyterians were considered as demanding too much in their present situation, and it was suspected that many would not be content even with the concessions demanded, nor would ever be reconciled to the government of the bishops, unless it were reduced to a mere name.

But, on this occasion, both parties were the dupes of Jesuitical policy. The prelates were persuaded, from a view of their power and security, to concede as little as possible. The Presbyterians were exhorted boldly to stand together, from the consideration, that on account of their numbers they could not be dispensed with ; and this was planned with the artful intention, that dissent from the established church should be made the more general, that so a toleration might be necessary, and by these means the Papists might gain admission, and disseminate their principles to the destruction of both. Under these circumstances, “ the Savoy conference ” took place, which was to reconcile the parties ; but it ended as might have been expected. The conduct of neither party is much to be admired for its moderation. Some few alterations were made, but not very material, nor were they on the whole calculated to satisfy. Dr. Tennison, afterwards archbishop of Canterbury, has candidly observed : “ If there was reason for these changes, there was equal, if not greater reason, for some further improvements. If they had foreseen what is since come to pass, I charitably believe they would not have done all they did, and just so much, and no more ; and yet I also believe, that if they had offered to move much further, a stone would have been laid upon their wheel, by a secret but powerful hand ; for the mystery of popery did even then work.”

In Scotland, things were carried with a still higher hand. The league and covenant were abolished, and the episcopal go-

vernment, against which the Scotch were so much prejudiced, was again set up by royal authority, and the episcopal office bestowed on persons of such a character, — with the exception of the excellent Leighton who afterwards retired, — that it was almost impossible to suppose, that a thinking and reflecting people could ever be brought to respect them, or to acquiesce in the new measures, without the exercise of extreme violence. Several of the Presbyterian ministers accordingly fell as martyrs in what they considered to be the cause of religion; and the most cruel scenes of persecution, and of popular violence, where the people were goaded into rebellion, were displayed, in various parts of the kingdom, for several years, till the period of the revolution, when the church government of their choice was conceded to the Scottish nation. In England, the policy which had widened the breach between the Episcopalians and the Presbyterians, pursued its advantage. An act of uniformity was passed, which made conformity more strict than even before the civil war. In consequence of this, it is calculated that two thousand ministers were ejected from the church, the greater part of whom might have been easily satisfied and safely trusted, and who could ill be spared at this time for the sake even of the Protestant interest itself. “Here,” says bishop Burnet, “were many men, much valued, some on better grounds and others on worse, who were cast out ignominiously, reduced to great poverty, provoked by much spiteful usage, and called upon those popular practices that both their principles and circumstances seemed to justify, of forming separate congregations, and diverting men from the public worship, and from considering their successors as the lawful pastors of those churches in which they had served.”

It was the secret policy of the court, as has been observed, that when the nonconformists had tasted a portion of the bitterness of persecution, and had seen it exercised in full measure upon the Anabaptists and Quakers, on various pretences of political danger, that they should be indulged with a toleration, that under the same terms the Roman Catholics might be bought in. The leading churchmen of the day, ignorant of this scheme, and to their everlasting disgrace, became the willing instruments of the court, to urge forward this persecution of the dissenters.

But when the design was perceived, by the king's beginning to claim a dispensing power, the parliament, hitherto so subservient, began to take alarm. With a view of keeping out the Papists, they made the laws against all nonconformists still more strict; and some of our severest laws against dissenters ori-

ginated in this policy, as the test act, the five-mile act, &c. And it was remarked, that some of the wisest and most leading men among the Dissenters, aided the parliament in these measures against the court, well aware of the design of the Papists, and being content that their own party should suffer for a time, rather than that a door should be thrown open to the former.

To make the royal indulgence more desirable, it would seem as if these laws were executed with the greater severity upon the Protestant Nonconformists, while the Roman Catholics were connived at and encouraged, till the alarm for the growth of popery became at length very general. The secret of the king's religion, however, was not known, and all the apprehension seemed to be directed towards the duke of York, his presumptive heir, and an avowed Papist. During these contentions arose the great political parties of Whig and Tory, which have long divided the nation; the former animated with a jealous alarm against popery and arbitrary power, the latter easily excited with the apprehension, that the prerogative of the crown might be overturned by the factious, and the nation again be plunged into the excesses of the long parliament and of the commonwealth. Perhaps there was danger on both sides; and we observe, that in proportion as that danger was seen, or magnified in the apprehension of men, by their particular situations and interests, many well-meaning persons, and real friends to their country, adopted the cautious politics of either the one or the other party. The extremes of both parties were violent and bad. Those of the former would have hazarded all for a democratical scheme of civil liberty; those of the latter would have sacrificed the constitution to the will of the prince, and were suspected of acting under the secret management of papistical courtiers. But the great body of the two parties must be considered as only aiming at the welfare of their common country, and the support of its institutions by different ways and different counsels; and many fluctuated in their attachment between the two parties, as they saw the danger more prominent on the one side or on the other. The Dissenters, in general, would of course lean to the Whigs, as their surest reliance for toleration; for that which was offered by the royal indulgence, the wisest of them well knew was but a mask to hide the introduction of popery. It is probable also, that some remnants of the commonwealth-party still existed among some of the sects. And it would naturally happen too, that, as far as the danger of popery could be concealed, the friends of the episcopal establishment would lean to

the Tories. So lately emerged from the ruin in which the reign of the sectaries had overwhelmed them, they could not but be very liable to the apprehension of the church being in danger. The older clergy, raised from a state of poverty and persecution to sudden affluence and power, by the restoration of the king, were likely to betray an extravagant attachment to his person and authority; they were also further accused of indulging a spirit of revenge against the authors of their former troubles and injuries; and their aiding in the cruel persecution of the Nonconformists, is a most condemning proof of the truth of the accusation. In their blinded zeal, indeed, they had nearly been made the instruments of sacrificing the church of England, and the Protestant interest, to the objects of a popish court. But, by degrees, a new class of clergy was formed in the midst of the establishment, who were chiefly young men at the time of the former troubles, and free from the vindictive spirit of their brethren, and, perhaps, from the corruption of their sudden prosperity; who were equally attached to the church of England, but more moderate in their politics, better acquainted with her true interests, and capable of discerning, in the present circumstances, what ought to be the chief object of her alarm.

These were first distinguished by the appellation of “the country clergy,” and “the low churchmen.” All the patronage, indeed, that the court could command, had for the most part been lavished on men of another description, and the higher stations of the church were in their hands; neither did the former sound such high pretensions to ecclesiastical authority. They were also more disposed to a coalition with the Protestant Dissenters than with the Papists, as they saw that, in the present circumstances, the latter were more to be dreaded than the former. For the consolidation of the Protestant interest, they would have been content not only to remove some indifferent things, at which the Presbyterians had taken offence, but, it is very much to be feared, even to alter some of the most beautiful of the ancient formularies of our worship, in accommodation to the Presbyterian taste, and to yield something to the growing latitudinarianism of the times, with regard to the strong assertions of the ancient creeds with respect to doctrines. Belonging to this class were many whose names the subsequent danger of the church, and the happy revolution in the civil government which followed, called into deserved notice and public esteem, as Tillotson, Tennison, Cudworth, Whichcote, Wilkins, Burnet, Stillingfleet, &c. “Many of them were men

of great learning and virtue; they were the most eminent preachers of the age, whose sermons and writings did honour to the church of England in the worst of times. They lamented the corruptions and vices of the people, and stood in the gap against an inundation of popery and tyranny<sup>1</sup>."

In February, 1684, died the profligate Charles. He was succeeded by his brother James II., an avowed Papist, who resolved to hazard every thing for the advancement of the popish religion. He began by holding a language fair and deceptive, which laid asleep the vigilance of many who ought to have known popery better. Agreeably to the maxims of the Jesuitical policy, he aimed at crushing one party by the instrumentality of another. Full range was at first given to the persecution of the Dissenters, and his suspicions against that body were enhanced by the unsuccessful invasion of the duke of Monmouth, on which occasion the cruelties of Jeffreys and Kirk recalled the recollection of the most barbarous times. James's plan seems at first to have been to crush the Dissenters, and then to devour the church; but his counsels were afterwards changed, and he endeavoured to caress the Dissenters, and arm them as a party against the church. With some he succeeded; but the greater part did not much relish the privilege of being the last to be devoured.

The fact was, the church had taken alarm, which diminished the influence of the high Tory party, and brought forth the party of "the country clergy" into popularity and action. Under the patronage of the king, and by every inducement which his station enabled him to offer, the Jesuits and Roman priests were now making proselytes in every rank of life. Roman bishops were openly consecrated, and an open correspondence was held with the pope. The pulpits of the established church now sounded the alarm against popery, and boldly exposed its errors. This was called "speaking disrespectfully of the king's religion." The policy formerly pursued by archbishop Laud, in order to introduce Arminianism, was first had recourse to. The bishops were required by the king to prohibit the inferior clergy from preaching on the controverted points of religion; and some were brought into trouble for disobedience. The Roman Catholics, as they had not the ears of the people, had recourse to the publication of a multitude of tracts to circulate amongst them. The clergy of the church now resolved to encounter them with the same weapons. Every pamphlet published by the Jesuits was immediately answered, and, by industrious management, a

<sup>1</sup> Neale.

sight was often procured of the tract while it was being printed, and the answer published at the same time with it. Hardly a week passed in which some sermon or small treatise against popery was not printed and dispersed among the common people : thus the Papists were baffled in all their attempts to seduce the English nation, and the victory of the clergy was complete.

This success exasperated the king in the highest degree against the clergy. He attempted to lay the blame of the late persecution of the Dissenters upon them, and proclaimed himself the patron of universal toleration. But, as he could not accomplish this by law, he resolved to effect it by his dispensing power. The privy council was new modelled, and the judges and leading lawyers were rendered subservient to his will. He then on a sudden began to declare his favour towards the Dissenters, and encouraged them to open places of public worship, for which he gave them his license<sup>1</sup>.

As an instrument of oppression over the church, the king next restored the High Commission, though contrary to act of parliament. The first person marked for an example was Compton, bishop of London, who, in the short parliament which met in the reign of James, had ventured to oppose the measures of the court, and had lately displeased the king, by refusing at his command to suspend Dr. Sharp, for preaching on the Romish controversy. By this court the bishop was suspended from his office. The privileges of the universities were also violated, and an attempt made to introduce Papists there ; and men, who carried to the extreme their notion of the duty of obedience to the king, were now compelled to make their choice between that obedience and the sacrifice of their church and of the Protestant religion. In such a dilemma they could not hesitate, and were soon put to the proof. The king again published a declaration for liberty of conscience, and for dispensing with the laws in favour of Papists and all other dissenters. He commanded this declaration to be read in all the churches, during the time of divine service. A great majority of the clergy interpreted this act of reading the declaration, as making them a party therein, and very generally refused to read it. Most of the bishops disobeyed, and generously interposed themselves between the inferior clergy and the vengeance of the king. Seven of them met at Lambeth, where the archbishop, Sancroft, was confined by

<sup>1</sup> The chief writers in this controversy were, Tillotson, Stillingfleet, Tennison, Patrick, Wake, Whitby, Sharp, Atterbury, Williams, Aldrich, Burnet, Fowler, &c. Many of them were afterwards advanced to the highest dignities of the church.



illness, and signed an address to the king, stating, in respectful terms, their reasons for disobeying his commands. The bishops of Ely<sup>1</sup>, Bath and Wells<sup>2</sup>, St. Asaph<sup>3</sup>, Chichester<sup>4</sup>, Peterborough<sup>5</sup>, and Bristol<sup>6</sup>, went to present this address to the king. To his angry threats their reply was, "The will of God be done." The bishops could not but feel themselves on this occasion strong in the support of public opinion ; yet, considering that James had the courts of judicature at his command, and also at this time an army much under papal influence encamped in the neighbourhood of London, their conduct must be considered as bold and magnanimous. The king felt the crisis, and hesitated ; but he resolved at length on violent measures, and ordered the bishops to be prosecuted. The contemporary writers describe the metropolis as having never, on any occasion, been thrown into such a state of agitation. All classes of persons, forgetting former differences of opinion, contemplated the bishops as the guardians of the laws and religion of their country. As they were conveyed by water to the Tower, the banks of the river were crowded with the kneeling multitude, asking their blessing, and imploring blessings upon them. Several of the nobility, and a great concourse of people, attended them on their trial at Westminster Hall ; and the rejoicing shouts for their acquittal not only spread through the city, but even reached the king's ears, in the midst of his camp at Hounslow-heath. The king would still have persisted in his measures, but his authority was destroyed, and the hearts of his people were entirely alienated from him. The voice of the nation invited the prince of Orange, who had married the next Protestant heir to the throne, to come to their deliverance. All that followed—the infatuation of the king—the panic which seized all his friends—the sudden unanimity of all the conflicting interests in the kingdom, in one common object—and even the critical adjustment of the winds, which brought in safety the prince of Orange to these shores—all these circumstances together seemed to expose more to the view and common observation of mankind than usual, that "never-failing providence of God that governeth all things in heaven and on earth : " "that setteth up kings and putteth down kings, and changes the times and seasons ; " and which, though for the most part unseen, and often most mysterious in its conduct to human wisdom, should ever be the confidence of his believing people.

Thus our happy and bloodless revolution was accomplished. William and Mary, by the consent of the nation, were placed on

<sup>1</sup> Turner.    <sup>2</sup> Kenn.    <sup>3</sup> Loyd.    <sup>4</sup> Lake.    <sup>5</sup> White.    <sup>6</sup> Trelawny.

the deserted throne of James II., 1689. A bill of rights was passed, terminating the hurtful disputes respecting the extent of the royal prerogative, which had for so many years distracted the kingdom.

The settlement of religion, however, could not be accomplished in that way which the more moderate Nonconformists and the part of the clergy who, by their late services, were now raised to the chief direction of affairs, could have wished. The toleration of Dissenters, and protection of their worship, were readily granted ; but when the moderate Episcopalians would have altered some ordinances and customs to favour a comprehension of the Presbyterians, they were deterred by no imaginary fear of encouraging dissent from the established church in an opposite quarter. For it was now understood that many of the bishops and clergy scrupled to take the oaths to the new government ; and it was apprehended that any alteration in the rites and ceremonies, would be the occasion of combining a large party with them, affecting zealously to uphold the old Common Prayer Book against the new ; and thus a new schism might be created in the church.

Such, indeed, were the sentiments of a majority in the parliament and convocation, with respect to religion, that king William and the moderate party were defeated in all their attempts at a comprehension. The jealousy excited by the abolition of episcopacy in Scotland, which the position of political parties in a measure compelled the king to enforce, is considered to have had a powerful influence on the minds of the Episcopalians in England. So violent was the party spirit which was engendered, especially in the lower house of convocation, that the exercise of the regal prerogative was necessary to prevent mischief ; an end was put to the session, and the business of the convocation suspended by a course of prorogations for ten years.

Archbishop Sancroft and the rest of the nonjuring bishops, after their deprivation, were suffered to continue more than a year in their sees, and great pains were taken to reconcile their consciences to give the pledges required by the new government. When this was found to be impracticable, the greatest care was taken by the king, to fill their places with divines of the highest character and of moderate principles. Dr. Tillotson was made archbishop of Canterbury, and Dr. Sharp, on the death of the archbishop of York, was appointed his successor. The same wise policy was exercised in filling up the inferior stations in the church. But kind and conciliating as was the administra-

tion of archbishop Tillotson, an attempt was made to create a schism in the church, on the notion that the legislature had not the power to deprive the nonjuring clergy. Dr. Tillotson continued in his primacy only two years, and was succeeded by Dr. Tennison, a man of the same moderate principles.

Nearly with the close of the sixteenth century, 1702, died king William III., under God the deliverer of this nation from tyranny and popery; concerning whom the highest eulogy of a king may be pronounced, that it was to be lamented that he possessed not greater power and influence to do all the good which he had projected for the interests of religion.

The state of religious instruction at this period, may be known from the writings of Tillotson, Sharp, Atterbury, Sherlock, &c. If as writers they were superior, to the divines of the former age, in the manner and philological beauties of their discourses, in doctrine and in matter they were far inferior. Though able advocates for the church of England against popery, and for revelation against infidelity, and most eminent as moral instructors, yet they afforded but a very unfrequent, faint, and cold exhibition of those peculiar truths of the Gospel which the reformation had restored. This age produced, however, and saw advanced to the episcopal bench, a Stillingfleet and a Beveridge.

The Dissenters did not hesitate, according to the Act of Toleration, to sign the doctrinal articles of the church of England; but Mr. Baxter had departed very far from the old Puritan standard, and some others of the Presbyterians seemed to lean to that side. What has been called the Neonomian controversy, occasioned by the republication of Dr. Crisp's works, which, in the latter part of the last century, nearly divided the Presbyterians and the Independents, appears, in its results, to have had some tendency in lowering the tone of religious sentiment among the former, if, indeed, they had not embraced a very different system. The tide of opinion ran strongly in their favour. Stumbling at the paradoxes of Dr. Crisp, and appearing as the champions of "holiness," against "the exuberance of grace," they were in extreme danger of clogging the channel which fed the flame of pure religion. And I conceive that an evil effect of the controversy, described by two late historians of the Dissenters<sup>1</sup>, on this occasion, is very discernible in the sermons and writings of many dissenting

<sup>1</sup> Bogue and Bennet.

divines from about this period, increasing more and more as the century advances. "When a minister has been warmly engaged in supporting what he considers to be the cause of holiness, and the obligations of Christian duty, against those who are supposed by him to turn the grace of God into wantonness, it is often found to have a pernicious influence on his future ministrations. Obedience to the Divine commands is the general theme of his discourses. He seems as if he were afraid of the doctrines of grace, he is shy of preaching them, and they are mentioned but seldom; and when he does mention them, instead of its being done with that ardour of delight which they ought always to inspire, it is with timid caution, with anxious solicitude that they may not be abused, and with many directions for preservation from dreaded abuse: hence, the animating virtue of these precious truths is lost; and the preaching, robbed of that unction which they convey, is meagre and ineffectual." I apprehend that this description is generally applicable to the first symptoms of decay of vital religion and of Gospel truth, in every age of the church, in every sect of Christians, and in every neighbourhood where a real revival had been experienced.

During the reign of queen Anne, from 1701 to 1714, the clashing of the two great political parties into which the nation was divided, was often very violent; but the concerns of religion were now but a secondary consideration, though they sometimes made the ostensible motive in the struggles of the different parties<sup>1</sup>.

It appears, however, that the public opinion, which, in the former age, had been so much in favour of the Puritans, and was much prejudiced against the ruling clergy, had now received an opposite bias. A contemporary writer observes: "The church and its priesthood was never more generally beloved, its worship never more frequented, its altars never more crowded, than at this day<sup>2</sup>." This favourable change is

<sup>1</sup> "There were two parties," bishop Burnet observes, "among the clergy: one was faithful and firm to the present government; the other expressed a great esteem for the Jacobites, and in all elections gave their votes to those who leaned that way. At the same time, they shewed great resentment against the Dissenters, and were enemies to the toleration, and seemed resolved never to consent to any alteration in their favour. The bulk of the clergy ran this way, so that the moderate party were far outnumbered. Profane minds had too great advantage from this, in reflecting severely on a body of men that took oaths and performed public devotions, when the rest of their lives was too public and too visible a contradiction of such oaths and prayers."

<sup>2</sup> Bisse.

certainly to be attributed chiefly to the labours of those divines whom the revolution had placed in the road of preferment. Advantage was taken of this state of the public feeling by the Tory party, who were desirous of displacing the Whigs from the helm of government; and the cry of "the church in danger," often excited the people to riot, and to many culpable excesses, which, in the opinion of some, rendered the times dangerous to the principles of the revolution, and of civil and religious liberty. The importance given to the political career of an insignificant individual, Dr. Sacheverel, illustrates the nature of the frenzy which, at this period, affected the minds of the great body of the people. In this state of things, a Tory administration was formed, who were suspected, by their political opponents, to be more favourable to the interests of the Pretender than to the succession of the house of Hanover. The policy of their government was, to depress and discourage the Dissenters, as a party attached to their adversaries in politics. Hence, "the Occasional Conformity Act," which deprived the Dissenters of all offices of trust under government. An attempt also was made to prevent their being employed in the education of children. These were measures for the security of the established church, not dissimilar to what had been pursued for the security of the Protestant religion against the Papists; but the cases were considered to be different; and it gave great scandal, that one of the ministry who was most zealous in this cause, St. John lord Bolingbroke, was known to be a blaspheming infidel, and an enemy to the Christian religion itself.

The accession of the house of Hanover, A.D. 1714, secured in the civil government, the principles of the revolution, which had been somewhat in danger from the violence of party in the reign of Anne; and the English nation began to feel more and more the good effects of the happy constitution which it had been the work of ages to bring to perfection. From that period, the temporal prosperity of the nation has been progressive, or but little impeded, and increasing population has been the natural consequence. In the history of no nation where the church of God has sojourned, do we find so long a period of uninterrupted peace; and no where has she had so many causes of thankfulness for temporal blessings. But when we look into the internal state of the church, we cannot say that it exhibits a parallel scene of spiritual prosperity.

The bad and crooked policy which had driven so many able and useful men to dissent from the establishment, and the

avidity with which the Dissenters now availed themselves of toleration—losing all the scruples of their suffering forefathers, respecting the sin of schism and the evils of separation—cannot be sufficiently lamented. The order and authority of religion have received a wound, never perhaps to be healed; and its public profession has been a far inferior concern of society from that period. The irreligious and the absentees from public worship, were countenanced by the example of those who appeared the most religious. In some situations, those who, mingling with society, might have been the salt of the earth, were separated by themselves, and associated together in a state of aversion to their neighbours—by no means to the improvement of their own characters; and too often, where they could not make proselytes, their conduct had the effect of shaking the attachment of the people to the established religion of the country: a consequence which, perhaps, cannot be separated from dissent. Popery rejoiced at our divisions; infidelity and atheism increased, and demanded toleration also.

But important as church order is to the welfare of the visible church, there was a more powerful cause in operation, than the dissolution of this bond, which had tended, and was yet tending, to the decay of real Christianity amongst us. This was the loss of the true and peculiar doctrines of revelation, as recovered at the reformation.

During the reign of Elizabeth, and the former part of the reign of James I., as has appeared from the foregoing history, this faith was kept whole and undefiled in the majority of serious professors of all parties; but from the period that archbishop Laud set the fashion of a new faith in the church of England, imported from the Remonstrants in Holland, a great alteration took place in our church as a body. Dr. Mosheim has designated the opinions of the early Arminians, as “deriving their existence from an excessive propensity to improve the faculty of reason, and to follow its dictates and discoveries.” In this point of view, as was before remarked, it was not so much a new system to explain the doctrines of grace, as the first revolt of the human understanding, from the shackles of those doctrines set forth at the reformation. It was truly over again “the spoiling of philosophy,” and was very similar to that first general corruption of Christianity in the primitive ages, which proceeded from the school of Alexandria. A religious sentiment, we trust inspired from above, has kept the hearts of some entire, who went far into this scheme as a doctrinal speculation; and we have



known sects and teachers who have borne the name of Arminian, very zealous and strenuous in enforcing some all-important doctrines of revelation. But Arminianism, among its first professors on the continent, was often seen to lead the mind into a wider departure from the received doctrines of the faith; and rational Christianity, as it was termed, led by imperceptible degrees to Socinianism, and sometimes to deism. The clergy in England, who had imbibed the same spirit, bound by subscriptions, and evidently opposed by the prejudices, as well as the sounder principles of the people, and in many cases, we trust, held by a superior tie, did not run into these extremes. But the standard of evangelical doctrine was amazingly lowered, under the notion of the greater usefulness of inculcating chiefly the moral duties of Christianity; and, at length, as we have seen, silence was commanded by authority on the controverted points, when — on whichever side the truth lay — some grand essential doctrines of the Christian faith were in dispute. There have been professed Arminians, as well as followers of Luther and of Calvin, who would have considered this as silencing the Christian revelation itself; but it appears to have been the genius of the religion of the Remonstrants, to banish from public instruction all “the mystery of godliness,” as proper only for the speculation of the schools; and to substitute in its stead a mere ethical style of preaching. This was the great injury that archbishop Laud effected in this church. The most superstitious rites and ceremonies which he attempted to introduce, were harmless in comparison of this; and some of them might, perhaps, in another age, have been seen in a different point of view, as tending to the more reverential and impressive conducting of divine worship.

The injuries which Laud received in the ensuing conflict, and the barbarity of his murder, tended much to raise his character and the force of his example among the English clergy; and it is remarkable how many of the most eminent among the sufferers during the period of the great rebellion, imbibed in a greater or less degree, his views with respect to doctrine and preaching! What promoted this, was the triumph of the Puritans, who generally maintained the doctrines of the reformation. Extravagantly zealous to promote the style of worship which their taste approved, and the dupes at the same time of abler politicians, they destroyed the former church order and government, without ever being able to erect another which could command general respect. The anarchy and spiritual

- licentiousness which followed, illustrated still more the benefit of order and of the ancient church government to religion, and almost made the people of that age regret the times of the oppression of former governors.

It is true that some Arminian sects arose out of this chaos, as the Quakers and the General Baptists; but the chief actors in this scene were professedly zealous for the faith of the reformed churches; and the extravagances of some, which, without discrimination, were applied to the whole, created such great prejudices against sound doctrine, that the giddy multitude were easily led, at the restoration, to hate, despise, and ridicule all religion; and a great proportion of the clergy, during the succeeding reigns of the Stuart kings, were settled in the Arminian faith, — that species of Arminianism which loses sight of all the peculiar doctrines of revelation, to substitute in their stead mere ethical instruction.

With some exceptions, we cannot say that the great bishops and divines whom the revolution brought into power, made any efforts to restore the doctrines of the reformation. As governors of the church, they were truly “benefactors,” and did much to curb the fury of a proud and ignorant, and sometimes a licentious clergy and people. As moral writers and defenders of the outworks of Christianity against infidels, in which, unhappily, they had now much employment, they were truly excellent; but as “stewards of the mysteries of God,” to open and explain the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel, and to apply them to the consciences of men, they were very far inferior to the divines of the reformation and of the subsequent age. Nay, in their judgments, I apprehend, though they revered their memory, they thought very differently concerning “that foolishness of preaching whereby it has pleased God to save them that believe.” But here, “the foolishness of God” — what his creatures esteem to be such — was found to be “wiser than men.” What did these eminent men, with their truly excellent moral discourses, do for the nation, supported as they were by their high office and character? Alas! their preaching proved altogether weak and impotent against the tide of irreligion and profligacy which had overflowed the nation since the period of the restoration.

The state of the clergy and people at the end of the reign of Anne, as given by bishop Burnet, is truly deplorable. “During my whole life,” he remarks, “I have lamented that I saw so little true zeal among our clergy. I saw much of it in the clergy of the church of Rome, though it is both ill-directed and ill-con-

ducted. I saw much zeal also among the foreign churches ; the Dissenters have a great deal among them ; but I must own, the great body of our clergy has always appeared dead and lifeless to me, and instead of animating one another, they seem rather to lay one another asleep." " I have observed the clergy in all the places through which I have travelled, Papists, Lutherans, Calvinists, and Dissenters ; but of them all, our clergy is much the most remiss in their labours in private, and the least severe in their lives." Speaking of the Articles, he says, " The greater part subscribe them without ever examining them ; and others do it because they must do it, though they can hardly satisfy their consciences about some things in them."

His description of the laity is, " The commonalty of this nation are much the happiest, and live the easiest and the most plentifully of any that ever I saw. They are very sagacious and skilful in managing all their concerns ; but at the same time it is not to be conceived how ignorant they are in matters of religion. The Dissenters have a much larger share of knowledge among them, than is among those that come to our churches. This is more to be wondered at, considering the plainness in which matters of religion are wrote in this age, and the many small books concerning these that have been published of late years, which go at easy rates, and of which many thousands are every year sent about by charitable societies in London ; so that this ignorance seems to be obstinate and incurable." Of the gentry the bishop observes, " They are for the most part the worst instructed, and the least knowing of any of their rank I ever went amongst. A gentleman here is often both ill-taught and ill-bred ; this makes him hasty and insolent. The gentry are not early acquainted with the principles of religion ; so that after they have forgot their Catechism, they acquire no more new knowledge, but what they learn in plays and romances. They grow soon to find it a modish thing, that looks like wit and spirit, to laugh at religion and virtue, and to become crude and unpolished infidels." " As for the men of trade and business, they are, generally speaking, the best body in the nation, generous, sober, and charitable ; so that while the people of the country are so immersed in their affairs that the sense of religion cannot reach them, there is a better spirit stirring in our cities ; more knowledge, more zeal, and more charity, with a great deal more of devotion." The stage he reckons the great corrupter of the town.

Bishop Butler also, in the preface to his *Analogy*, gives a

striking picture of the tendency to infidelity in those days. He laments "that it was then taken for granted, that Christianity was not so much as a subject of inquiry even; and accordingly they treat it as if, in the present age, this were an agreed point among all people of discernment, and nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule, — as it were by way of reprisal, for having so long interrupted the pleasure of the world."

Such was the awful state of the nation! — having now for twenty years been deprived of her ancient establishment, and prejudiced against the truths of revelation, from the extravagancies and hypocrisy of some who assumed the teacher's office during the usurpation, — corrupted by the profligacy of the court of Charles II., — having suffered an irreparable loss by the expulsion of nearly two thousand ministers, who were generally attached to the doctrines of the reformation — and since the restoration having been placed under a new mode of religious instruction, which, if not avowedly semi-Pelagian, laid very little stress upon the doctrines of grace, as these truths are exhibited in the Articles and Homilies, but attempted, by the charms of human eloquence and the preaching of moral duties, to supply the want of the Gospel of Christ.

In the track of Arminianism followed revivals of the ancient heresies of Arianism, and close in their footsteps, some who held and taught the doctrines of Socinus. Whiston, professor of mathematics in the university of Cambridge, and Dr. Samuel Clarke, appeared among the former; Mr. Firman, an intimate friend of archbishop Tillotson, among the latter. Their converts in private seem to have been not a few; and the very stirring of these controversies in an irreligious age, aided the triumphs of infidelity and Epicurean indifference.

Among the Dissenters, we may naturally expect to find, from the very circumstances of their congregations, an attachment to the doctrines of the reformation subsisting to a longer period, and which appears to have been the case. Indeed, in some congregations of Independents and Particular Baptists, these doctrines were never renounced; so that a cause of dissent which sometimes operated, was, not a dislike to a few ceremonies, a liturgy, or a mode of government, but that the pulpit in the parish churches was found at variance with that liturgy; and what was understood to be the Gospel of Christ, was heard only at the meeting-house. The main body of the Dissenters, however, and more especially the Presbyterians, soon followed the

leading teachers of the church in the descending scale; and, unsustained by articles of subscription, and the use of a prescribed form of evangelical devotion, they sunk still lower from the standard of the reformation — until the successors of the old Puritans pitched their tabernacles among the tents of Arius and Socinus.

The Crispian controversy, as we have seen, had a bad effect upon those who were hailed as victors. If it was a victory, it was dearly bought, and seems to have awakened the powers of defence against a more dangerous foe that was preparing an attack in an opposite quarter. As the old Nonconformists, and those who had been formed by the teachers of that generation, died off, the effects became more and more apparent. The Goodwins, Owens, and Howes, had not equal successors as divines, although a Watts, a Doddridge, and a Gill arose.

“It could not be said,” say the modern historians of the Dissenters, speaking of what soon followed upon the accession of the house of Hanover, “that the doctrine of the preacher was contrary to the truth, but he did not breathe his soul into his sermons; his words appeared to freeze upon his lips; the people felt the chilling impulse, and on their faces might be read cold insensibility and frozen indifference.” “But during this period, (from 1714 to 1760,) error was the destroying angel of dissenting congregations. Instances might be produced, in which a preacher of superior talents has attracted or retained a numerous congregation in the metropolis or other populous cities, though his sentiments have been far from the orthodox creed; but, in the ordinary course of things — whenever they have departed from what is called Calvinism, the congregation has evidently felt the change; it has been arrested in its growth, and, after a time, visibly decayed. “Arminianism” was, “almost without exception, the first stage of congregational decline; Arianism may be called the second stage of the disease.” “Where Socinianism found an entrance, its operations were still quicker, and more effectual.” “A shrewd observer who drew up an account of the dissenting congregations in London, from 1696 to 1730, though rather high in Calvinism himself, does not charge any of the Presbyterian ministers with preaching the Arian doctrine. In a threefold list of Calvinists, Baxterians, and Arminians, he includes the whole; and that of the Calvinists is the largest of the three. The Independents and Particular Baptists were all strenuous for this system. He accuses none of going further than Arminianism, except some of the

General Baptists—among whom not only Arianism, but Socinianism was already professed. But before the conclusion of this period (1760), a more melancholy scene was presented to view: in every part of England, Arianism was not only embraced, but openly acknowledged, by not a few of the Presbyterian ministers. The heresy polluted some of the London pulpits; in Lancashire it was prevalent, and in the counties to the south: it gained ground also in the west, whence it first sprang. The generation of ministers who contended so zealously for the orthodox faith had finished their labours.” “Among those who succeeded them were too many who embraced the Arian creed: those champions among the laity who, at the beginning of the controversy, stood up so firmly for the truth, had entered into the joy of their Lord. Though their children continued Dissenters, too many of them did not possess the same sentiments or spirit; but with a liberal education and little religion, the Arian opinions gratified their literary pride, as being remote from the creed of the vulgar, and were less hostile to the depravity of the human heart than that which they renounced. To this unhappy change the example and conversation of many of the younger Presbyterian ministers did but too much contribute. In one or two of the seminaries, the tutors were accused of giving countenance to the heresy among the students. In consequence of these exertions, before the end of the period (A.D. 1760), Arianism spread far and wide in the Presbyterian congregations, both among the ministers and the people: in a few places a Socinian preacher appeared.” What strikes us as very remarkable, is, that before this apostasy became total, in some dissenting congregations the reputed orthodox and Arians would worship together, or never discovered the real sentiments of their teachers; and that sometimes they admitted as co-pastors, one of the old, and another of the new faith!

When, therefore, we review the state of religion in the former part of the last century, both in the general church and among the Dissenters, we are led to reflect, that except in some few churches and congregations, the doctrines of the reformation were in a manner lost, and the effect of that glorious visitation of mercy seemed to be almost at an end. The Dissenters who continued orthodox were driven into the corners; their insulated societies had but little effect upon the nation at large, as witnesses for the truth; and it is acknowledged, that in some cases a very narrow and selfish spirit was harboured among them, which gave religion herself a sour and forbidding aspect to



those who were strangers to her genuine influence. In the general church, though there never were wanting individuals, both among the clergy and laity, who gave evidence that they were “led by the Spirit of God,” and though—with some deficiency of religious knowledge, and poor notions of the liberty of Christ—repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, were still preached, and blessed to the souls of the hearers; yet, generally speaking, there was truly “a famine of the Word of the Lord.” The most admired preaching, and which almost universally prevailed, insisted chiefly upon the practice of moral virtues; it was remarkable for the absence of all mention of the name of Christ, and of every allusion to his work, and to the influences of his heavenly grace.

The desk, indeed, held another language; and on this very account, a parish church could not be so destitute of all evangelical light, as an Arianised presbyterian meeting-house—because all did not depend upon the officiating minister. The church, in regard of her liturgy, was still “a pillar of the truth;” and a congregation in the church of England, could not attend at morning and evening prayer, and at the communion service, without hearing and rehearsing a full declaration of Gospel truth, in all its most essential points. But still, it is remarkable how little this was understood or perceived. The multitude both of priests and people, too often “drew near to God with their lips, when their hearts were far from him,” and offered indeed “the sacrifice of fools.” This state of things, not yet every where gone past, and never altogether unknown, as to some parts of the most enlightened congregations, illustrates that great truth of revelation,—the necessity of a spiritual illumination: “the things of God are foolishness to the natural man, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

It also seems to shew, that the raising up of faithful preachers of the Gospel, is still the usual method which the great Head of the church is pleased to employ, in saving them that believe. Instances of conversion and of spiritual edification have not been wanting in the worst of times, from the using of the Liturgy, and from reading the Book of Common Prayer; but, judging from all appearance, the instances have been very rare, in comparison of the blessing which has generally attended the poorest efforts of the weakest of Christ’s ministers, who have been truly taught by him, and have been raised up as heralds of his mercies. We can assign no reason for this, but that such is the sovereign pleasure of God. Appearances may perhaps deceive us, and in some measure they probably do, in this mat-

ter ; but hitherto, if we include all other means of instruction, even the reading of the Holy Scriptures themselves, except in connexion with a preached Gospel, it seems, that in all ages, from the times of the apostles, the great public work of divine grace has been carried on by sending messengers, according to our Lord's representation, " to open the dark eyes, to turn men from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins, and an inheritance among them who are sanctified through faith in Christ." This we certainly know, that in those congregations in the church of England, where the pulpit contradicts the desk, or is silent on those " mysteries of the faith" on the foundation of which our public services are constructed,—the state of religious knowledge is deplorably low ; worship is for the most part mere formality, or much tinged with superstition. Some go about to establish their own righteousness, and are outwardly moral and charitable to the poor ; but for the most part, a cold indifference, and sometimes an absolute pagan ignorance of Christianity prevails.

From all the accounts that we have of those days, this, it is to be feared, was very much the state of the English church, in the former part of the last century,—and that at a time when some very eminent men, both as scholars and as moral instructors, were advanced to high stations in the church and in the public esteem ; when their discourses—the best of their kind that had ever been penned—were read or echoed from almost all the pulpits of the kingdom. Barrow, Tillotson, and Atterbury preached, and 'The Whole Duty of Man' excellently laid down the wished-for standard of morals ; but very faint and powerless were the exhibitions of original sin and human depravity, and of the utter helplessness of man ; and, in proportion, cold and lifeless was the preaching of the cross of Christ ! The powers of the human will were magnified, and of course the entire necessity of the work of the Spirit of grace was less insisted on. Though the major part were sound in the fundamental doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation, which were brought forth at festivals ; yet these, and all the doctrines of grace in the Articles, seemed an expensive and complicated apparatus, for which there was, practically, little use. Morality was considered as all in all.

But it should be particularly observed, that as the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel were lost sight of, vice, profligacy, and immorality increased ! It is said, indeed, that some of the more gross features of the debauchery prevalent in the reign of Charles II. had been somewhat amended by the moral periodical

publications since the revolution, and the better example of the court, under the princes of the house of Hanover. It appears, however, that vice and irreligion, and especially a more refined sensuality, pervaded more deeply the general mass of the people, Hurtful luxury, from the increase of wealth, is much complained of; and, above all, the prevalence of drunkenness, from the more common introduction of the use of spirituous liquors. The taste for public amusements and scenes of dissipation was excessive, and descended to a lower rank of society than heretofore. The public theatres and houses of entertainment, erected like temples of Belial, drew the general concourse from the churches; and Christians seemed to have publicly recalled their vow of "renouncing the pomps and vanities of this wicked world."

A contemporary writer—the Rambler—describes as something new, "the different places of amusement and dissipation which the general dissoluteness of manners had contributed to make very frequent, routes, drums, concerts, balls, &c. for the evening, and even for all night, and in the summer there were assemblies in every country town." "By the natural infection of example," he says, "the lowest people have places of six-penny resort, and gaming tables for pence. Thus servants are now induced by fraud and dishonesty, to support extravagance and supply their losses." "The immorality of the drama had increased, and the most indecent, seditious, and blasphemous pieces were performed, and resorted to with incredible eagerness." When an act of the legislature was passed<sup>1</sup>, to check in some measure this profane licentiousness, it was exclaimed against, as "the introduction of absolute authority" and "perpetual slavery!"

The spirit then worked, which, in our day, was to be permitted so nearly to overturn all the institutions of the church and state, and to attempt the very extinction of the light of revelation. It was even then published, that "the rights of the Christian church demanded the abolition of ordinances, and the very being of a Christian ministry." "Free-thinking" was the great idol to be erected. A discourse, published by Collins<sup>2</sup>, "On the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion," attempted to destroy the evidence of prophecy; Woolston made an attack upon our Saviour's miracles<sup>3</sup>; and Tindal, on the ruins of revelation, would have exalted natural religion as a perfect guide to happiness. All these writers, and others of the same class, pretended only to release men from their ancient prejudices, while the direct tendency of their publications was to

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 1735.<sup>2</sup> A.D. 1724.<sup>3</sup> A.D. 1727.

undermine all religion, and to let loose those floods of licentiousness, infidelity, and atheism, which, at the end of the century, overflowed a country less favoured than our own, and threatened all civilised society with destruction.

Low as was the state of the church of England, she produced at this period many able defenders of the outworks of Christianity, who were, at this particular era, an unspeakable blessing to the nation; and among the Dissenters also appeared some few able writers in defence of revelation. To the names of Butler, Sherlock, and Gibson, are to be added Doddridge, Leland, and even the Arian Lardner, whose errors had been already checked by Bull and Waterland. Archbishop Secker was a faithful guardian of our church from infidelity, and the laymen West and Lyttleton appeared in the same cause; and here also the powerful pen of Warburton was of great avail. At the same time, the encouragement given to the publication of the works of David Hume, the revival of the philosophy of Shaftesbury, and the posthumous publication of the works of Bolingbroke, shew the infidel taste of the times.

Though able advocates were raised up to defend revelation against infidelity, and the fundamental doctrines of the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Atonement, against the Arians and Socinians, they appeared like the remnant of a garrison defending the citadel when the town was already taken, and the enemy had overrun the country. The doctrines of the reformation, speaking generally, had been driven from the pulpits; that Gospel which is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth," was scarcely heard in the land, or at least was very coldly and very obscurely stated.

But it pleased God, at that very period, to grant a revival of the knowledge of salvation, and to raise up such messengers as the times required, in order "that the poor might have the Gospel preached unto them," and that the churches of Great Britain and her distant colonies might hear a call—"REMEMBER HOW THOU HAST RECEIVED AND HEARD, AND HOLD FAST AND REPENT:" a call which, we trust, has not been heard in vain. For, at the lowest estimate, the knowledge of revealed truth among us is in a very different state from what it was at the beginning and in the middle of the last century—notwithstanding that causes inimical to the profession of all religion have been in full operation, and that infidelity has triumphed in the overthrow of what may be called the hereditary faith of thousands.

It was an honour put upon the church of England, that the vial of this holy unction should be poured upon her; but somewhat

to the disgrace of her watchmen, that her sluices and channels were not laid open to receive and convey the heavenly communication into all her numerous reservoirs. To this it must mainly be ascribed, that the stream which now began to flow, burst forth in some disorder; and while it irregularly fertilised the country, seemed to carry ruin to some portion of her well-constructed works, and was in part directed to supply new strength to those who are arranged as her adversaries. But still her true sons must agree “whence it was” — “from heaven, not of men!” If much that is carnal has mingled itself with it, and something that bespeaks the subtlety of the prince of darkness — as has ever been wont to be the case on such occasions — still they have beheld a scene, upon the whole, like that in which the apostle was determined to rejoice: “Many of the brethren, waxing confident,” “are much more bold to speak the Word without fear. Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife, and some also of good will: the one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely” — “but the other of love.” What then? “Notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached: and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.”

The limits of this work forbid the delineation of any thing like a history of methodism, — for by this name was the revival of Gospel preaching distinguished or stigmatised; and although the term is now becoming appropriate to a particular sect only, yet, like many an ancient term of reproach, it long branded every appearance of fervour and zeal for evangelical doctrine, and of that strictness of deportment which must ever accompany “the perfecting of holiness in the fear of God.” In this wide and extensive use of the term, which is not yet quite obsolete amongst us, the history of methodism is the history of religion, in the latter part of the last century. All went by the name of Methodists, who had but the appearance of extraordinary piety, however associated with former opinions respecting the controversies which had so long agitated and divided the nation. Indeed, it was a new era in this respect; the strictness of the high churchman was relaxed, and the dissenter could with difficulty obtain respect for his *jure divino* discipline. In their fervent zeal for what seemed of more importance, all ancient institutions appeared to many, “as old bottles which would not hold the new wine.” Liturgies, ceremonies, church order and government, to those who regarded them most, became matters of secondary importance. With those who took the lead in this revival of religion, every thing was “a question of expediency;” and those who had the most decided opinions, bowed to the necessity of the sacrifice, where

a higher interest seemed to them to be involved. It was urged, in application to all the most sacred institutions of the church, that "the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." And when such a current of religious feeling set in, it was too much to expect from the infirmities of man, that the apostolical canon would be always observed, even by those of the best intentions: "Let all things be done decently and in order."

One main head of this stream, which now flows in both hemispheres of the globe, is traced to the university of Oxford, in a society chiefly of young men, who,—as they were afterwards led to understand and acknowledge,—though they were deeply impressed with the concerns of eternity, were at this time ignorant of the true way of salvation. Mr. John Wesley, fellow and tutor of Lincoln College, who had been educated in the high church principles,—which, though certainly not less averse to spiritual religion than the latitudinarian principles which were the boast of the times, rendered it less probable that he should become the founder of a sect,—must be named as the precursor of this reformation. Deeply concerned for his salvation, he had for some time separated from his worldly companions; and, in his anxiety, had undertaken a distant journey, to see and consult a man celebrated for his piety. The person consulted seemed to him, on this occasion, to deliver the response of an oracle: "Sir, you wish to serve God, and to go to heaven; remember you cannot serve him alone, you must therefore find companions, or make them: the Bible knows nothing of solitary religion."

In Mr. John Wesley's state of mind, the advice made a strong impression. Returning to Oxford with the resolution of putting it in execution, he communicated his intentions to his younger brother Charles, then a student of Christ's Church, a man of similar feelings with himself, and they associated with them a Mr. Morgan, and Kirkman, of Merton College. At first they read together divinity on the Sunday evenings, and on the other evenings the Greek and Latin classics. But these last were soon discarded for the Greek Testament, and theology became at length the grand concern of their little society. They proposed to themselves to keep the regular fasts of the church, to receive the Lord's supper once a week, and to visit the sick and the prisoners. Thomas à Kempis appears to have been a favourite author; they were to meditate on his work for an hour every Sunday. Every thing was to be done by a prescribed order. At the hours of nine, twelve, and three, they were to use a collect; from twelve to one on Wednesdays and Fri-



days, they were to meditate on the Saviour's passion. These peculiarities procured them the name of "Methodists;" a name which had been before given to a religious sect, not much known, in the time of the protectorate, and had also distinguished a school of physicians and of Romish divines on the continent; but now arose afresh from observation of the "methodical" piety of Mr. Wesley and his friends.

This society, called also, in derision, "the Holy" or "the Gospel club," was first formed in the year 1729. They were fifteen in number; several of the pupils of the Wesleys joined it in the following year, and two years afterwards, Mr. Ingham of Queen's College, and Mr. Broughton of Exeter, with Mr. James Hervey, the author of the "Meditations." In 1734 they were joined by Mr. George Whitfield, then only a youth of nineteen, already remarkable for his early piety. Like those with whom he united himself, he was now but an inquirer after the way of salvation; but was destined not only to profit beyond those of his own age, but to recover far more of the doctrines of the reformation, than the father of methodism himself, and to rouse the slumbering churches, with a sanctified eloquence which had no parallel in his day.

The religion of the Methodists was at this time very much of the ascetic cast, blended with a great deal of mysticism. The celebrated Law, author of "The Serious Call" and of the "Christian Perfection," was much consulted by them. And Mr. Wesley himself, who retained always, as some thought, something of the mystic about him, could afterwards reflect upon his present religious pursuits—"as a refined way of trusting to my own works, and my own righteousness, by pursuing inward holiness, or a union of soul with God, so zealously inculcated by the mystic writers; whom, I declare in my cool judgment and in the presence of the Most High God, I believe to be one great Antichrist."

In the year 1735, the society at Oxford was broken up, by the departure of the Wesleys and others to America. This journey was undertaken, partly with the desire of preaching the Gospel to the Indians, but more especially, with the views with which an anchorite retires from society to work out his salvation in the desert. This first mission, from various causes, seemed to prove abortive. Mr. John Wesley, however, had met, among his fellow-passengers in the voyage, with some persons, whose conversation and deportment in the dangers of the ocean convinced him that they were in possession of a faith in Christ to which

he was a stranger. These were Moravians from Germany, going forth as missionaries indeed.

But before Mr. Wesley's return—rather convicted of his deficiencies, than enlightened with the knowledge of the truth—Whitfield had found, “what flesh and blood cannot reveal,” and what Wesley had in vain crossed the seas in search of. Filled with all joy and peace in believing, he had “straightway preached Christ,” and had filled some of the most populous towns of England with his doctrine, to the joy of many, and to the wonder and offence of more.

Almost ruined in his bodily health through the practice of the austerities and abstinence which his Oxford companions had taught him, Whitfield had retired to his native town of Gloucester, where he not only recovered his health, but, from the reading and study of the Scriptures, had found peace of mind, and “the knowledge of redemption in the remission of sins.” He had now tidings to carry to perishing sinners, and industriously employed his time among the poor and the prisoners in the jail.

The bishop, Dr. Benson, who heard of his labours, sent for him, and told him, “That although he had purposed to ordain none under three-and-twenty, yet he should reckon it his duty to ordain him whenever he applied,” And surely, if it is the duty of the Christian minister “to seek for the sheep of Christ scattered abroad in the midst of this naughty world,” it is also the duty of the bishop, to whose office it pertains, under God, to send forth labourers into the Lord's vineyard, to seek for those of whom, as in the case before us, there is good reason to conclude, that the Holy Ghost is moving them to take upon them that service. Had the bishops of England, on this occasion, as far as circumstances permitted, imitated the conduct of the bishop of Gloucester, how had they magnified their office, and advanced the cause of religion, and the interests of the church of England in particular! For it soon became apparent, that at this season of revival, many such men as Whitfield were to be raised up, who, though destitute of his advantages of education, and not equal to him in natural abilities, yet were men endowed with competent knowledge, very considerable talents, and animated with the same fervent zeal to preach the Gospel. They were, in fact, such men as the times and state of religion required, both in Great Britain and her colonies. Had the bishops taken up these men, and invested them with a regular authority to preach the Word, they had done more for the cause of Christ and the welfare of the British people, than by all their able publications against infidelity

and heresy, or by any effort that the most zealous prelate, in ordinary circumstances, can make for the encouragement of religion. The irregularity of the Methodist ministry, and the schism—still growing to an alarming extent—had probably been prevented; the spirit of order had been breathed into the heterogeneous mass; and the counsels and authority of the fathers of the church might have prevented a great deal of those aberrations of mistaken piety, which have attached to methodism; and would have tried and confounded many a lying spirit, which has gone forth amongst them.

But the true friend of the church of England, and of primitive order, will lament, when he reflects on that which was the too general conduct of the superior clergy at this great crisis; and will fear to tell his suspicions, that there was not always “the simplicity of the dove,” where manifestly there was not “the wisdom of the serpent.”

We may admit that the Methodists were too indifferent about church order, and in their zeal, weighed not the consequences of some of their measures; yet their original leaders always professed that they did not voluntarily secede from the church of England, but were driven by degrees from her community; and that, when forced to retire, they departed with a slow and unwilling step, and with regret at every fresh remove. And, however we may contemplate the state of their societies in some parts of the country after a period of nearly a century, when new generations have succeeded, I think we may challenge the instancing of such an example of decided attachment to episcopal order, in a body of people so circumstanced as the Methodists have been. Though, in pursuance of their object, by necessity compelled, as they conceived, to employ lay preachers, or to set up ordination themselves, they long retained a decided partiality for ministers who had been episcopally ordained; and we find, by a publication as late as the year 1814, giving a description of the Methodist societies in Ireland, that a single episcopal minister, which the connexion possessed, was employed to travel through the kingdom, as the only person among them who was considered as authorised to administer the Lord’s supper<sup>1</sup>.

But we return to Mr. Whitfield, who must be considered as the first preacher of *the Gospel* among the Methodists. Ordained in June 1736, he began his career at Gloucester, on the following Sunday; and though some mocked at the *strange doctrine*, yet

<sup>1</sup> Candid and Impartial Inquiry, &c. &c., by a Member of the Society. Belfast, 1814.

many were seriously impressed. Report was carried to the bishop, that fifteen persons had been driven mad: the bishop only expressed a wish, that the madness might not be forgotten before the next Sunday. Whitfield's mind was much set upon following the footsteps of the Wesleys in America; but while he was detained in England, "God began to bless his ministry in an uncommon manner." Wherever he preached, in Gloucester, in Stonehouse, in Bath, and in Bristol, great multitudes of hearers flocked together, so that the heat of the churches was spoken of as scarcely supportable, and the lasting impressions made upon the minds of many, were no less extraordinary, than the general excitement of curiosity. In London, while waiting to embark, it pleased God to bless his Word still more. Some of the clergy took umbrage at his doctrine respecting "justification" and "regeneration," which seemed to be something new to them; but he was told by many of those dissenters who still retained a knowledge of these generally forgotten doctrines, "that if the new birth, and justification by faith, were preached powerfully in the churches, there would be few dissenters in England."

In December 1737, he left London for America. The impression was great among his companions with whom he sailed, and also at Gibraltar, where the vessel was delayed<sup>1</sup>. During his stay at Savannah, from May to August, in 1738, his ministry was much owned of God. He tells us also that the good which the Wesleys and their companions had done in Georgia, was inexpressible. So that if it be true, as they afterwards thought, — Mr. John Wesley especially, — that they understood not then the nature of true faith, they had preached the doctrine of repentance, and it had been blessed as "the preparation of the Gospel of peace<sup>2</sup>." Mr. Whitfield returned to England, and received priest's orders from bishop Benson in the beginning of the year 1739.

Meanwhile, Mr. Wesley had taken a journey into Germany, to converse with the Moravians, whom he conceived, from what had occurred in his late voyage, and from the opinions which he had since imbibed from some of them in London, "to be the" only "living witnesses to the full power of faith." He found there, indeed, among some singularities of discipline and profession, the true doctrine concerning the faith which justifies the ungodly; but it was the same as that which is described in

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Whitfield tells us in his Journal, that he found at Gibraltar, among the soldiers, what might be called a Methodist society, of twelve years' standing.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Wesley says: "I preached the Gospel there, not as I ought, but as I was able."

the Homilies, and which had been the common profession in England by all parties, for many years after the reformation. Mr. Whitfield had learned it at home ; and it is truly remarkable that Mr. Wesley, who was religiously educated in his father's family, should be a stranger to this doctrine.

The place visited by Mr. Wesley, was Hernhut, the chief residence of the Moravians, where, under the patronage and pastoral care of count Zinzendorf, a pupil of professor Franke, the remains of that ancient church, which had migrated from their native country of Bohemia, had formed a new settlement, and, as a work of Christian charity, had addicted themselves in a particular manner to the propagation of the Gospel among the heathen. Zinzendorf had formerly taken a journey to England, to consult with archbishop Potter, " Whether there would be any objection on the part of the church of England, to employing the brethren as their missionaries in Georgia ? " The reply of the archbishop was : " That the Moravian brethren were an apostolical and episcopal church, not sustaining any doctrines repugnant to the church of England ; that they therefore could not with propriety be hindered from preaching the Gospel to the heathen." Hence the occasion of the acquaintance of Mr. Wesley with these enlightened missionaries.

He had returned to England two or three months before Mr. Whitfield arrived from Georgia, who acknowledged with thankfulness, that his fellow-labourers, John and Charles Wesley, had been blessed in watering the seed which he had sown a year before in London.

He thus describes his situation in that city : " Blessed be God, I am employed from morning till midnight—there is no end of people's coming and sending to me ; and they seem more and more desirous, like new-born babes, to be fed with the sincere milk of the Word. What a great work has been wrought in the hearts of many within this twelve-month ! "

The churches in London where he was permitted to preach, though spacious, could not hold the congregations which assembled to hear him. This suggested the idea of preaching in the fields, which, on his arrival at Bristol, he first practised among the colliers at Kingswood. On these neglected people, half-barbarian in their manners, the effect of his preaching was astonishing. His congregations were soon numbered by myriads ; and the gladness with which these despised outcasts, who had many of them never been in a church in their lives,

received the Word, was above description. Mr. Whitfield writes: "Having no righteousness of their own to renounce, they were glad to hear of a Jesus, who was a friend to publicans, and came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." "The first discovery of their being affected, was, to see the white gutters made by their tears, which plentifully fell down their black cheeks: hundreds and hundreds of them were soon brought under deep convictions, which, as the event proved, happily ended in a sound and thorough conversion. The change was visible to all, though numbers chose to impute it to any thing rather than the finger of God. As the scene was quite new, and I had just begun to be an extemporary preacher, it often occasioned many inward conflicts: sometimes, when twenty thousand people were before me, I had not, in my own apprehension, a word to say; but I was never totally deserted, and frequently so assisted, (for to deny it would be lying against God), that I knew by happy experience what our Lord meant by saying, 'out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.' The open firmament above me, the prospect of the adjacent fields, with the sight of thousands and thousands, some in coaches, some on horseback, and some in trees, and at times all affected and drenched in tears together, to which sometimes was added the solemnity of the approaching evening, was almost too much for and quite overcame me."

Similar scenes were witnessed in many parts of Wales, Gloucestershire, and Worcestershire, and wherever this messenger of the Gospel travelled. In Wales, however, the revival had already begun, under the preaching of Griffith Jones and Howel Harris. The former, Mr. Whitfield says, "in the account he gave me of the many obstructions he had met with in his ministry, convinced me that I was but a young soldier just entering the field." This apostolic labourer had already been exceedingly successful in the principality, and had been the means of erecting no fewer than fifty charity schools. "Blessed be God," Mr. Whitfield exclaims, "there seems to be a noble spirit gone out in Wales: they have many burning and shining lights, both among the dissenting and church ministers." Howel Harris was an indefatigable labourer in the same vineyard, and had already nearly thirty societies in South Wales. He had travelled over seven counties, making it his business to go to wakes, &c., to "turn the people from such lying vanities." His success, which none could dispute, was a sufficient evidence that the times and state of the country required such a man;



but his repeated applications for ordination in the church met with refusals<sup>1</sup>.

Mr. Whitfield, before he quitted his work at Bristol, had sent to call Mr. John Wesley to his assistance : he arrived there in April. He says : " I could scarcely reconcile myself at first to this strange way of preaching in the fields, of which Mr. Whitfield set me an example on Sunday ; having been all my life (till very lately) so tenacious of every point relating to decency and order." He however followed the example with success.

An extraordinary effect appeared under Mr. Wesley's preaching about this time, which afterwards much distinguished that branch of the Methodists of which he may be considered as the particular founder. Many persons, especially women, were thrown into a kind of epileptic fits, which seemed connected with strong religious impressions. How these should arise, and how one should catch the infection from another, without any imputation of hypocrisy, is easy to be accounted for ; but why they should attend Mr. Wesley's preaching and some of his followers, rather than that of others, it were difficult to say, except that he encouraged them, and gloried in them as a spiritual effect of his preaching. By all judicious Christians this matter has been regarded to his prejudice. He, however, considered it as the hand of God ; and with amazement we hear him appeal to these extraordinary affections of the mind and body, as a miraculous attestation to the truth of his doctrines on those very points where they departed from the standard of better times ! " April 25th, while I was preaching on these words, ' He that believeth hath everlasting life,' I was insensibly led, without any previous design, to declare strongly and implicitly,—that God willeth all men to be *thus* saved ; and to pray, that if this was not the truth of God, he would not suffer the blind to go out of the way ; but if it were, he would

<sup>1</sup> " In France there occasionally came to the aid of the venerable curé, under the name of missionaries, a certain number of secular or regular priests, employed by the bishop of the diocese to perform what was termed a mission, within a particular precinct. They generally remained in it about ten or fourteen days, at the expense of the bishop or their own ; and were wholly employed, from a very early to a very late hour of the day, in preaching and instructing the flock," &c.—" If," says cardinal Maury, " there remains among us any trace of the ancient and nervous eloquence, which is nothing else than the first cry of nature imitated or repeated by art, it is in the missions among villagers that we must seek for examples of it," &c.—BUTLER'S *Reminiscences*, p. 267.

*bear witness to his Word. Immediately one, and another, and another, sank to the earth; they dropped on every side as thunderstruck."*

Mr. Whitfield, in the same year, 1739, had adopted the practice of preaching abroad in the open air, in the vicinity of London. The numbers collected seem astonishing; by computation, fifty thousand, and even eighty thousand are mentioned! Every where Mr. Whitfield was encouraged by appearances of great and evident success. Again he crossed the Atlantic, and arrived, in October, in Pennsylvania, and till the end of the following year, travelled up and down in the British colonies, afterwards to become the United States of America.

We have already had occasion to remark, that the uneasiness and the harsh treatment of the ancient Puritans, were among the causes which had induced a multitude of families and ministers to transport themselves into this newly-discovered world. Here, under the forms of which they were so extravagantly fond, religion flourished for some time; but all their writers<sup>1</sup> speak of a very sad declension about the commencement of the eighteenth century; a clear proof that that "platform" of discipline, for which their forefathers sacrificed so much, had not the great advantage they had fondly imagined, over the national establishment which they deserted.

Mr. Danforth, on a public occasion, in 1670, makes the serious inquiry, "Whether they had not in a great measure forgotten their errand into the wilderness?" and draws a deplorable contrast between the zeal and piety of former times and their present "exercise of holy things," as "matters of custom and ceremony;" while "pride, contention, worldliness, covetousness, luxury, drunkenness, and uncleanness," had "broke in as a flood, and good men grew cold in their love to God and one another." Dr. Increase Mather writes in the same strain, in the year 1678: "The work of conversion has made a great stand in the world. In the last age, in the days of our fathers, scarce a sermon was preached but some were evidently converted, and sometimes hundreds in a sermon." But "the body of the rising generation is a poor, perishing, unconverted, and (except the Lord pour down his Spirit) an undone generation. Many are profane, drunkards, swearers, lascivious, scoffers at the power of godliness, despisers of those

<sup>1</sup> See Prince's Christian History.

that are good, disobedient: others are only civil, and outwardly conformed to good order, by reason of their education, but never knew what 'the new birth' means."

In another book, published in 1702, he says: "You that are aged persons, and can remember what New England was fifty years ago, that saw these churches in their first glory, is there not a sad decay and diminution of that glory? How is the gold become dim! the most fine gold changed!" This venerable pastor holds the same language twenty years afterwards, in his eighty-third year. "Having been for sixty-five years a preacher of the Gospel," "I had an opportunity to converse with the first planters of this country: I cannot but be in the disposition of those ancient men, who had seen the foundation of the first house, and wept with a loud voice to see what a change the work of the temple had upon it. I wish it were no other than the weakness of Horace's old man, the *laudator temporis acti*, when I complain there is a grievous decay of piety in the land, and a 'leaving the first love,' and that the 'beauties of holiness' are not to be seen as they once were; and the very interest of New England seems to be changed from a religious to a worldly one." "What did our forefathers come into this wilderness for? Not to gain estates as men do now, but for religion; and that they might leave their children in a hopeful way of being truly religious." Mr. Whitfield saw this venerable pastor in his old age.

Notwithstanding the general declension, there had, however, been remarkable revivals of pure religion in particular parts of America, before the visit of this evangelist. Dr. Cotton Mather mentions a short revival in Massachusetts colony, about 1680, and in the colonies of Plymouth and Connecticut: "But alas!" he observes, "it soon passed away." A second instance occurred in 1705. This was principally at Taunton, and began with meetings for prayer among the young men, and societies for reformation, in imitation of those at London. Mr. Stoddard, the grandfather and predecessor of the justly celebrated American divine, Jonathan Edwards, could record five particular harvests, as he termed them, of conversion of souls during his ministry at Southampton. The first was about the year 1679, the second about 1683, the third about 1696, the fourth about 1712, the fifth and last about 1718. "Some of these times," says Mr. Edwards, "were much more remarkable than others, and the ingathering of souls more plentiful; but in each of them, I have heard my grandfather

say, the bigger part of the young people of the town seemed to be mainly concerned for their eternal salvation."

A revival of religion at Windham, in Connecticut colony, also took place under the ministry of Samuel Whiting, about 1721. "Now things," says the reporter, "put on the same face of gladness and delight as once they did at Samaria, when Christ was preached with success, Acts iii. 10: 'And there was great joy in that city.'" But he compares the town, on this occasion, to "Gideon's fleece, which was wet with the dew of heaven, when the rest of the country remained comparatively dry; and serious religion was sadly decaying throughout the land."

The next instance of religious concern is mentioned, as following an alarming earthquake, which visited New England in 1727. "Not a few," it was hoped, "were turned from sin to God in a thorough conversion; but the much greater part, who had been affrighted with terror, within a while forgot." A considerable revival had also taken place in 1730, at Freehold, in New Jersey, by the ministry of John and William Tennant. They hailed with gladness the coming of Mr. Whitfield among them, who was much blessed in watering the seed they had sown. We read with astonishment that, among the descendants of the Puritans, there had been a time when the doctrine of the new birth had been held in derision, and treated as a new and false doctrine. But now the great truths of "free, special, and sovereign grace, were received with power." "The sapless formalist," Mr. W. Tennant writes, "is become spiritual in his conversation; the proud and haughty are made humble and affable; the wanton and vile, sober and temperate; the swearer honours that venerable name he was wont to profane, and blesses instead of curses; the Sabbath-breaker is brought to be a strict observer of holy times; the worldling now seeks treasure in heaven; the extortioner now deals justly, and the formerly malicious now forgive injuries; the prayerless are earnest and incessant in acts of devotion; the self-seeker endeavours the advancement of God's glory and the salvation of immortal souls." "Through God's mercy we have been quite free from enthusiasm; our people have followed the holy law of God, and not impulses of their own minds. There have not been, that I know of, among us any visions, except such as are by faith: namely, clear and affecting views of the new and living way to the Father, through his dear Son Jesus Christ; nor any revelations but what have been long since written in the sacred volume."

Mr. Whitfield was much pleased with the Tennants and their people : “ It is impossible to tell,” he says in his Journal, “ with what pleasure the children of God heard those truths confirmed by a minister of the church of England, which for many years have been preached to them by their own pastor. Mr. Tennant’s opposers’ mouths were stopped, several were brought under strong convictions, and our Lord’s dear disciples were ready to leap with joy.” He met also with a few other ministers, particularly Mr. Cross and Mr. Blair, who could tell him of similar revivals in their congregations, but in the midst of much opposition from ignorant and carnal people. On one occasion he says : “ My soul was much refreshed with the sight of Mr. Gilbert Tennant and Mr. Cross. Mr. Tennant has been in the West Jerseys and Maryland, and told me how God had remarkably worked by his ministry in many places. Mr. Cross also has seen great and wonderful things in his congregations ; so great, that when I came to desire a particular account, he said it directly answered to the account given by Mr. Edwards of the work of God in Northampton.”

This account had been already published, and had much attracted the attention of the friends of religion both in America and in England. It describes a revival of religion, under the ministry of the Rev. Jonathan Edwards before mentioned, which took place not only in Northampton, but also in other towns, both of the county of Hampshire, and of Connecticut colony, in the years 1734, 1735, and 1736. The narrative of Mr. Edwards remarks : “ Just after my grandfather’s death, it seemed to be a time of extraordinary dulness in religion : licentiousness for some years greatly prevailed among the youth of the town :—there had long prevailed in the town a spirit of contention between two parties — prepared to oppose one another in all public affairs.” “ But, in two or three years after Mr. Stoddard’s death, there began to be a sensible amendment of these evils ; the young people shewed more of a disposition to hearken to counsel, and by degrees left off their frolicking, and grew observably more decent in their attendance on public worship.” “ In the latter end of 1733, there appeared a very unusual flexibleness and yielding to advice in our young people.” “ There was a thorough reformation of the disorders ” complained of, “ which has continued ever since.” “ Presently after this, there began to appear a remarkable religious concern at a little village belonging to the congregation. Some remarkable deaths struck the attention of the young people, and they agreed to follow the advice of their pastor, to associate them-

selves for religious improvement; which was an example to the elder people." "About this time, many who looked upon themselves in a Christless condition seemed to be awakened, with fear that God was about to withdraw from the land, and that we should be given up to heterodoxy and corrupt principles."

"There were some things said publicly on this occasion, concerning '*justification by faith alone*.' Although great fault was found with meddling with the *controversy* in the pulpit, by such a person, and at that time, and though it was ridiculed by many elsewhere; yet it proved a word spoken in season here, and was most evidently attended with a very remarkable blessing of Heaven to the souls of the people of this town. They received thence a general satisfaction with respect to the main thing in question, which they had been in trembling doubts and concern about; and their minds were engaged the more earnestly to seek, that they might come to be accepted of God, and saved in the way of the Gospel, — which had been made evident to them to be the true and only way: and then it was, in the latter part of December, that the Spirit of God began extraordinarily to set in, and wonderfully to work amongst us; and there were, very suddenly one after another, five or six persons who were to all appearance savingly converted, and some of them wrought upon in a very remarkable manner." In particular, the conversion of a young woman, whose former character even rendered Mr. Edwards apprehensive of some mischief to the religion which she embraced, was so clear and decided, that he says, "The news seemed to be almost like a flash of lightning upon the hearts of the young people all over the town, and of many others." "Presently upon this, a great and earnest concern about the great things of religion became universal among persons of all ages." "Other discourse but of the things of religion would scarcely be tolerated in any company; the minds of the people were wonderfully taken off from the world." "They seemed to follow their worldly business more as a part of their duty, than from any disposition they had to it." "There was scarcely a person about the town who was left unconcerned about eternity." "In the spring and summer of the year 1735, the town seemed to be full of the presence of God: it never was so full of love, nor so full of joy, and yet so full of distress, as it was then: there were remarkable tokens of God's presence in almost every house. Strangers who came to the town felt the holy fervour; and it was extended from one end of the country to another, and many places of Connecticut partook of the same mercy." "When God, in so remarkable a manner, took the work



into his own hands, there was as much done in a day or two, as at ordinary times, with all the endeavours that man can use, and, with such a blessing as we commonly have, is done in a year." This scene also Mr. Whitfield visited.

But it is remarkable, that the effects of this extraordinary dispensation in the town of Northampton, in the space of fourteen years should be so entirely extinct, that nine-tenths of the church should agree to dismiss the same learned and most eminent minister, for his resisting some improper practices in the next generation of young people who were growing up : a sad specimen of the consequences of a democratical form of government in the church !

In the year before Mr. Whitfield arrived, there had also been several revivals in different parts of America ; so that he who came to send fire in the land, found it in particular spots already kindled. But his ministry was wonderfully employed to cherish the flame, and to propagate it far and wide over the colonies, which, in many parts, were most defectively provided with religious instruction, and the means of public devotion. As in England, he was attended by thousands and ten thousands, wherever he travelled ; and those who were able to judge, attested every where the great and lasting effects of his visits.

The point of view in which these American divines regarded the doctrine and preaching of Mr. Whitfield, we learn from their own pens<sup>1</sup>. " From the year 1738 we had received accounts of the Rev. Mr. Whitfield, as a very pious young minister of the church of England, rising up in the spirit of the reformers, and preaching their doctrines, first in England and then in America, with surprising power and success." " He speaks with a mighty sense of God, eternity, the immortality and preciousness of the souls of his hearers, of their original corruption, and of the extreme danger the unregenerate are in, with the absolute necessity of regeneration by the Holy Ghost ; and of believing in Christ in order to our pardon, justification, and yielding an acceptable obedience." — " His doctrine was plainly that of the reformers, declaring against our putting our good works or morality in the room of Christ's righteousness, or their having any hand in our justification, or being indeed pleasing to God, while we are totally unsanctified, acting from corrupt principles, and unreconciled enemies to him ; which occasioned some to mistake him as if he opposed morality. But he insisted on it, that the tree of

<sup>1</sup> See Prince's Christian History.

the heart is by original sin exceedingly corrupted, and must be made good by regeneration, that so the fruits proceeding from it may be good likewise; that where the heart is renewed, it ought to be, and will be, careful to maintain good works; that if any be not habitually so careful, who think themselves renewed, they deceive their own souls; but even the most improved in holiness, as well as others, must entirely depend on the righteousness of Christ for the acceptance of their persons and services. And though now and then he dropped some expressions that were not so accurate and guarded as we should expect from aged and long studied ministers, yet I had the satisfaction to observe his readiness with great modesty and thankfulness to receive correction as soon as offered." "He addressed himself to the audience in so tender, earnest, and moving a manner, exciting them to come and be acquainted with the dear Redeemer, that it melted the assembly into tears."

This testimony appears the more valuable, as these ministers had been educated in the doctrines of the old Puritans, who, while they quarrelled with the church of England on questions of church government and discipline, never hesitated in avowing their assent to her doctrinal articles, as those articles were understood previous to the disastrous days of Charles I.

It soon appeared, however, that Mr. Wesley and his followers did not fully agree with Mr. Whitfield in their doctrinal scheme, and on the return of the latter to England, in 1741, a breach took place between them, which could never be thoroughly healed; and hence has arisen the division of the Methodists into two great branches, as we now behold them, the Arminian and the Calvinistic; for the measures pursued by both these reformers, of associating in their labours persons who had not received ordination in the church of England, and of forming societies independent of her jurisdiction, by a necessary consequence soon led to that separation from her communion, which both had so much deprecated. It should seem, however, that for some time there was a similarity in the manner in which both parties stated the doctrines of repentance and faith — doctrines on which they principally insisted in their public discourses; for the opponents of both could with great difficulty be made to understand that Mr. John Wesley and his followers were not Calvinists. The praise of consistency in his doctrinal statements, will hardly be challenged for Mr. Wesley.

A candid author of "An Inquiry into the Present State of Methodism," belonging to his connexion, observes, that "many of Mr. Wesley's first principles were those which rigid Armi-

nians now call Calvinistic<sup>1</sup>.” “In a general point of view, however, it is certain that the principles of the Methodist societies are decidedly of an Arminian cast; and they have been gradually assuming more of this character, from the first formation of those societies down to the present day.” “The fact seems to be,” observes the same author, “that our principles want to be revised; to be more accurately defined, and more steadily fixed. Sometimes we acknowledge we lean too much towards Calvinism; and then, to avoid the rocks of antinomianism, we vibrate to the extreme of Arminianism, or the borders of Pelagianism; and every thing bearing the resemblance of Calvinism is now scouted with detestation, as bordering on heresy. And in these alternate vacillations, we drop some of the precious jewels of the Gospel, which our intemperate zeal has identified with the dross of heresy and corruption. Nor do we discover our loss, until we see the noxious weeds of Pharisaism springing up in every corner of the Lord’s vineyard.”

Mr. Wesley was seen at a very protracted period of his life, presiding, as a venerated patriarch, at the head of his connexion, which he had moulded, by a peculiar form of discipline, into one uniform and intimately connected body, — a measure which has added, no less than their rapidly increasing numbers, to their strength and importance, insomuch that the term Methodist is very fast becoming a term appropriated exclusively to his followers. The Calvinistic Methodists, or those who coincided with Mr. Whitfield in his views of doctrine, — among whom are

<sup>1</sup> “In 1745, one of the queries proposed at conference was, ‘Does not the truth of the Gospel lie very near, both to Calvinism and antinomianism?’ Answer. ‘Indeed it does, as it were within a hair’s breadth, so that it is altogether foolish and sinful, because we do not quite agree with either the one or the other, to run from them as far as we can.’ These were the principles upon which methodism proceeded in perhaps its best and brightest days. An appearance of degeneracy in its professors afterwards induced the hazard of an attempt which is here styled ‘foolish and sinful.’ It was put in practice by the celebrated minutes of 1770, as the legitimate cure of the then prevailing declension in religion. Then the principles of methodism first assumed that rigidly Arminian aspect, which has often covered their face, as with a shield of brass, and (as they are sometimes delineated from our pulpits) has rendered them almost impervious to the heavenly rays of mercy and grace! Indeed it is a cause of thankfulness, that the full sentiments of those minutes are embraced by few, and promulgated by still fewer of our preachers\*.”

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\* See “A Candid and Impartial Inquiry into the Present State of the Methodist Societies in Ireland, by a Member of the Society.” Belfast, 1814.

to be reckoned the congregations belonging to a connexion formed by the late countess of Huntingdon, were never united into one body, in a manner resembling the Arminian Methodists. They are, however, found in great numbers in many parts of the kingdom ; especially if we extend the name to all who maintain the doctrinal articles of the church of England, but from necessity, expediency, or conveniency, have dispensed with the laws of her community, and admit, as dispensers of the word and sacraments, ministers who have received no regular ordination ; and who, for the most part, are not permanently attached to any particular congregation.

But the originating of these two great classes of religious professors, in whatever view we regard them, were not the chief fruits of that spirit of revival, which was kindled in the British nations towards the middle of the last century. Many of the ministers and people both of the established church of England, and that of Scotland, and many also among the orthodox dissenters and seceders from each, though they condemned the irregularity, and occasionally intemperate zeal of the Methodists, were about the same period stirred up to a more serious and cordial cultivation of that truth which they had received, *in common*, from their forefathers. The doctrines of the BLESSED REFORMATION have been in consequence, to a considerable extent, restored amongst us, and, by the blessing of Divine grace, not a few have felt their power ; and although there are many “ who have spoken evil of that way before the multitude,” and “ have gainsaid and contradicted,” yet, in contemplating the scene now spread before us, in the midst of our injurious divisions, we have reason to conclude, that the truth and importance of these doctrines are more and more acknowledged ; and we may feel encouraged to pray, that it may please God that, like the leaven hid in the three measures of meal, it may ferment there till the whole be leavened, and that all that do confess the holy name of Jesus, may agree in the truth of his holy word, and live in unity and godly love !

THE END.

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